the artistic seekers

santiniketan 1984–1988

PULAK DUTTA

THE ARTISTIC SEEKERS

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Documents and Works from
Suranjan-Rati Basu Archive

PULAK DUTTA

Published & designed by
Pulak Dutta

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Front cover image : *Sandhane,* Poush Mela, Santiniketan 1986.
Back cover image : Outdoor exhibition at a political gathering,
Tejganj, Bardhoman. 21 November 1986.

Bonopolli, Shyambati, Santiniketan 731235

Foreword

Why should we make art ? Can art be political and social ? Art for whom, about what, and how ? – these were the questions which brought a group of artists and friends to Santiniketan in 1984 to critically address these concerns related to art-making. Most of them had a Marxist outlook ; all of them were connected with Santiniketan, directly or indirectly. This gathering took place at a time when they had moved to different cities to earn their livelihood after completing their studies. This group of friends - with some leaving and some other joining on the way - came together every year to collectively explore paths and strategies to develop a practice which would take them and their art closer to the people.

This book is the chronicle of their journey since 1984 till 1988. Over the next year, i.e., 1989, each one concentrated on their individual works preparing for their show in Kolkata. They started calling themselves *The Realists* from their first professional show held in Kolkata in 1990. This time period - 1984 to 1988 - therefore, can be considered as the first part of their journey.

This story is primarily based on the archival materials preserved in Suranjan-Rati Basu collection. But as I too was a part of

the group, the story narrated here is not free from my personal views and interpretations ; there are inputs from my personal memories and experiences, too. But I hope the readers can form their own opinions and perceptions about the collective from the archival documents published along with it.

Our activities needed support from various kinds of people who are generally active only in the background – our parents living in Santiniketan and Kolkata providing space and food to all of us, rickshaw-walas giving helpful services, people cooking for us during the summer camps, friends keeping a live contact with our activities and so on. All these contributed to the growth of the kind of art-making we were trying to practice.

I am grateful to Rati Basu for giving me access to her archive and also permission to reproduce facsimiles of the original documents. Complete sets of the two folios we had produced are reproduced here. But the whole sets of calendars could not be reproduced as there were only these sets of works preserved in the collection – rest of them must have been either sold or distributed among friends.

All translations are done by the author and all the photographs used in this book are taken by the author unless otherwise mentioned.

Santiniketan Pulak Dutta
January 2025

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THE ARTISTIC SEEKERS

Santiniketan 1984-1988

'May 1984, a group of people - involved in different creative fields, gathered at Santiniketan. It was important for them to come together, exchange views, discuss problems and of course work out a definite course of action. Collective action ! There were series of discussions - scattered and directional ; there was confusion and conviction.'[1] This is how the exploration of a group of artistic seekers began.

All of them were connected to Santiniketan, directly or indirectly. It is therefore useful to look at the original objective of building a community called Santiniketan and particularly an 'abode of art', Kala Bhavana within this community. Rabindranath Tagore started his residential school, *Brahmacharyashram* at Santiniketan with five children on 22 December 1901. Santiniketan was an alternative to, and a protest against, the colonial educational system and the lifestyle it introduced. The ashram grew in time with the

[1] 'Invitation Brochure Note', *The Realists at their Group Show,* Jehangir Art Gallery, Bombay. 19-25 December 1994.

number of students, trees-animals-birds and activities increasing. Its continuously renewing educational philosophy and ideal never allowed the learning atmosphere at Santiniketan to be lifeless. By 1919, the atmosphere was vibrant with varied activities innovated and introduced in the community life.

Ghawnta-tawla, Shal-bithi, Madhobi-bitan. Santiniketan, December 1989

V i s v a B h a r a t i
the Santiniketan university

03 July 1919, a new academic section called *Uttor Bibhag* was added to the *Brahmacharyashram* in Santiniketan. The *Brahmacharyashram*, on the other hand was renamed as *Purbo Bibhag*. This is how Visva Bharati, the Santiniketan university made its first appearance. Initially it suffered from the problem of not having enough number of students, for who on earth, would ever be

willing to study at a 'university' where 'the system of examinations will have no place whatever ..., nor is there any conferring of degrees.' ?[2] Both teachers and students attended most of the lectures at Visva Bharati ; Rabindranath himself attended Sylvain Lévi's first lecture with his notepad, as he feared the number of listeners would not be worth bringing this international scholar all the way from France.[3] Studying Panini's Grammar, to which Rabindranath put particular importance, under Kapileshwar Mishra faced similar disinterest in the early days of Visva Bharati. On a cloudy day, the students - which included teachers as well and spanned 60 to 16 years of age - declared that one should not study grammar during lightning and thunder and led by Dinendranath, immediately started singing. Mishraji had no other choice but to sing along with them... ! As a result, senior students were relieved from the class.[4] On the other hand, as the number of lectures on Buddhist philosophy by Dharmadhar Rajguru Mahasthabir from Sri Lanka increased, the number of students started decreasing till there were only two people left to attend his lectures – one was Bidhushekhar and the other

[2] Bidhushekhar Bhattacharya, 'Visva Bharati: "Yatra visvam bhavatyekanidam"', *Santiniketan,* Vol. II, Issue 10, Magh 1327 [1921]. p. 573

[3] সৈয়দ মুজতবা আলী, *গুরুদেব ও শান্তিনিকেতন,* মিত্র ও ঘোষ, কলিকাতা, ১৪০২ [১৯৯৫] পৃ. ৭০-৭১ দ্রষ্টব্য। [Syed Mujtaba Ali, *Gurudeb O Santiniketan,* Mitra and Ghosh, Kolikata, 1402 (1995). p.70-71]

[4] প্রমথনাথ বিশী, *রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও শান্তিনিকেতন,* বিশ্বভারতী, কলিকাতা, ১৩৯৩ [১৯৮৬], পৃ ১২৪-১২৭ দ্রষ্টব্য। [Pramathanath Bishi, *Rabindranath O Santiniketan,* Visva Bharati, Kolikata, 1393 (1986). p. 124-127]

Rabindranath.[5] And these were the people in whose minds the idea of Visva Bharati had originated !

Rabindranath believed that, '...the primary function of our university should be the constructive work of knowledge. ... Education can only become natural and wholesome when it is the direct fruit of a living and growing knowledge.' and proposed that 'Men should be brought together and full scope given to them for their work of intellectual exploration and creation ; and the teaching should be like the overflow water of this spring of culture, spontaneous and inevitable.'[6] He also wrote, 'Let us resolve that education of Indian Music and Painting should be the main parts of Visva Bharati.'[7] Thus, Kala Bhavana with sections of music and visual art was established at Santiniketan in 1919, later to be separated as Sangit Bhavana and Kala Bhavana.

Visva Bharati was not a teaching institution, it was a learning institution ; it preferred the professorial system to the tutorial system. Therefore developing a learning environment that would help flower the creative spirit of the whole artist community and establish a harmonious collective was the primary task of Kala

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[5] প্রভাতকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায়, *রবীন্দ্রজীবনী,* তৃতীয় খণ্ড, বিশ্বভারতী, কলকাতা। ১৪০৬ [১৯৯৯], পৃ ২৭-২৮ দ্রষ্টব্য। [Prabhatkumar Mukhopadhyay, *Robindrojiboni,* Vol. III, Visva Bharati, Kolkata, 1406 (1999). p. 27-28]

[6] Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Centre of Indian Culture', Sisir Kumar Das [Ed.], *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore,* Vol. II, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 2004. p.469

[7] 'বিশ্বভারতী যদি প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয় তবে ভারতীয় সঙ্গীত ও চিত্রকলা শিক্ষা তাহার প্রধান অঙ্গ হইবে এই আমাদের সঙ্কল্প হউক।' রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, 'কলাবিদ্যা', *শান্তিনিকেতন,* ১ম বর্ষ, ৮ম সংখ্যা, অগ্রহায়ণ ১৩২৬ [১৯১৯] [Rabindranath Thakur, 'Kalabidya', *Santiniketan,* Vol. I, Issue 08, Agrohayon 1326 (1919)]

Bhavana. And as declared in the notice,[8] Kala Bhavana's learning programme was rooted in indigenous learning processes : both Rabindranath and Bidhushekhar emphasized on 'Indian' painting and 'Indian' School of Art.

One of the objectives of Visva Bharati was to develop an intimate relationship between the different cultures of the East on the basis of their underlying unity and 'approach the West from the standpoint of such a unity of life and thought of Asia'.[9] Accordingly, Stella Kramrisch, an Austrian art historian was invited to give an exposure of contemporary western art to the artist community of Santiniketan. According to Nandalal it was Stella Kramrisch, who established 'modern art' in Kala Bhavana through her series of lectures on modern art in 1921-22. Nandalal thought some ashram students developed an uncritical devotion to modernism largely because she was a European.[10] Instead of approaching the West from the Eastern or non-modern point of view, this section of students who developed an unconditional *bhakti* for modernism, started

[8] '(18) The course to be followed in this department is of not less than six years, and it will be divided into two parts, the first being for general efficiency and the second for higher efficiency. (19) Instruction in Drawing and Painting is given here according to the Indian School of Art. There is an Art Gallery as well as an Art Library attached to this department.' Bidhushekhar Bhattacharya, 'Visva Bharati: "Yatra visvam bhavatyekanidam"', *Santiniketan*, Vol. II, Issue 10, Magh 1327 [1921]. p. 573

[9] 'To bring into more intimate relation with one another, … the different cultures of the East on the basis of their underlying unity. To approach the West from the standpoint of such a unity of life and thought of Asia.' VISVA BHARATI / MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION, 1922.

[10] 'সেকালে আমাদের আশ্রমের ছাত্রদের মডার্ন-আর্টের ওপর অহেতুক ভক্তি জন্মে গেল স্টেলা ক্রামরিশের কৃপায়। ... আমার বোধ হয়, বিদেশী বলেই যেন ওঁদের ভক্তির মাত্রা একটু বেড়ে গেল।' পঞ্চানন মণ্ডল, *ভারতশিল্পী নন্দলাল,* প্রথম খণ্ড, রাঢ় গবেষণা পরিষদ, ১৩৯০ [১৯৮৩]। পৃ. ১২২ [Panchanan Mandal, *Bharotshilpi Nandalal*, Vol. II, Rarh Gabeshana Parshad, 1390 (1983). p 122]

approaching indigenous art practices from the western i.e., modern perspective. The modernist attitude gained in power and support over a period of time in Kala Bhavana and successfully marginalized ideas of the original objectives of Visva Bharati. The Modern-modernity-modernism circuit had an all-encompassing impact on Kala Bhavana's life, particularly after Nandalal retired and permanently after his death in 1966. With the appointment of a new principal in 1967, modernist attitude found its undisturbed, resistance-free seat in Kala Bhavana - it affected the curriculum, production and practice of art as well as the writing of its own history.

The process of picking up a few individuals and establish them as 'master's is an essential component of modernist way of life ; no wonder, it was around the same time that this myth-making process began in Kala Bhavana. As a result, history of Kala Bhavana today means a collection of discussion on a handful of individual artists. Significantly all women artists and all collective art-making projects of Kala Bhavana community are kept outside this 'history'. As the new habit of thought gets neutralized, nobody finds it unnatural or intentional anymore even when the discussion on collective works concentrates only on the works of selected individual artists.[11]

[11] A book on *The Santiniketan Murals* by Jayanta Chakrabarti, R Siva Kumar and Arun Nag, [Seagull Books 1995] and another on *Black House কালোবাড়ি,* edited by Sanjoy Kumar Mallik [Visva Bharati 2016] are significant exceptions.

In the early days of Kala Bhavana, the change in attitude from cooperative harmony to competitive struggle among a small number of students, was not strong enough to completely erase the collective spirit from the artists' community of Santiniketan. This was manifested through collective projects such as mural painting, decorating festivals, learning experience in excursions and picnics, building experimental mud houses, stage-costume design and so on at Santiniketan and Sriniketan. However, after Rabindranath's death in 1941, practicing projects of collective nature gradually started becoming weaker as the formal, individualistic, exhibition-based art practice started gaining in strength till the 1970's when the collective practice almost totally disappeared from the life of Kala Bhavana.[12] 1940's was also the time when ideological and pedagogical conflict between Nandalal and his student and later colleague, Binodbihari intensified. This led Binodbihari to leave Kala Bhavana and join Nepal Government Museum at Kathmandu as curator in 1948. He came back to Santiniketan and joined Nandalal-free Kala Bhavana as a teacher in 1957.[13] Binodbihari also worked as the Principal of Kala Bhavana for a brief period in 1966 and started the process of changes in teaching method, curriculum and examination system - decisively

[12] 'The earlier Nandalal way of learning through festivals, excursions and project work on site continues in fits and starts,' Dinkar Kowshik, 'Kala Bhavan', Exhibition Catalogue, *Art in Art Colleges of West Bengal*, Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata, 05-23 December 2001. p 38

[13] বিনোদবিহারী মুখোপাধ্যায়, *চিত্রকর,* অরুণা প্রকাশনী, কলকাতা, ১৯৭৯ দ্রষ্টব্য। [Binodbihari Mukhopadhyay, *Chitrokar,* Aruna Prakashani, Kolkata, 1979]

moving towards a mainstream modern art college. Dinkar Kowshik joined as the permanent principal of Kala Bhavana at 'Binod-da's instance'[14] in 1967 and successfully executed Binodbihari's pedagogical programme.[15] Kala Bhavana was broken into departments with specialized courses aimed at training students to become professional gallery artists. This effectively turned Kala Bhavana from a 'practice'-based learning institution to a 'product'-making teaching institution. But we know that the spirit of togetherness and friendship continued to survive at Santiniketan after Nandalal's death in 1966, and even after the restructuring of teaching programme led by the 'permanent' principal for about 11 years.

Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan, 1979

[14] 'In 1966, after Nandalals' [*sic*] passing away, Benodeda took over, till Dinkar Kowshik joined in 1967 as the principal, at Benodadas' [*sic*] instance.' Dinkar Kowshik, 'Kala Bhavan', Exhibition Catalogue, *Art in Art Colleges of West Bengal*, Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata, 05-23 December 2001. p. 38.

[15] বিনোদবিহারী মুখোপাধ্যায়, *আধুনিক শিল্পশিক্ষা,* বিশ্বভারতী, ১৩৭৯ [১৯৭২]। পৃ. ১১০ দ্রষ্টব্য। [See Binodbihari Mukhopadhyay, *Adhunik Shilposhikkha,* Visva Bharati, 1379 (1972). p. 110]

Dinkar Kowshik studied at Kala Bhavana in the 1940's ; he joined Kala Bhavana as principal in 1967 on Indira Gandhi's (then Prime Minister of India and Chancellor of Visva Bharati) request.[16] He soon became one of the most powerful members of Visva Bharati administration. This coincided with the peasant uprising led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) at Naxalbari in May 1967. Later a group broke away from CPI(M) to form a new party called the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) and within the next few years, successfully built strong organisations among the youth and the student communities. As the revolutionary activities started spreading across West Bengal, it came to be known as the Naxalite movement. This leftist political movement made a deep impact on the student communities and spread across the colleges and the universities of West Bengal. As it made its presence felt across different communities including the artist community of West Bengal, Kala Bhavana started appointing new teachers[17] - all from Kolkata, all studied at the same art college and all professional gallery artists, with a single exception - Kanchan Chakraberti, a former student of Kala Bhavana who joined the department of History of Art. Significantly, not a single woman teacher was appointed during this time.

[16] '১৯৬৬ সালে নন্দলালের প্রয়াণের পর দেশের প্রধানমন্ত্রী তথা বিশ্বভারতীর আচার্য ইন্দিরা গাঁধীর অনুরোধে কলাভবনের ভার নিয়ে শান্তিনিকেতনে আসেন দিনকর কৌশিক, সেটা ১৯৬৭ সাল।' সুশোভন অধিকারী, 'সম্পাদক সমীপেষু : কলাভবন ও কৌশিক' আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা, ১৯ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০১৯। [Sushobhan Adhikary, 'Sampadak somipeshu : Kala Bhabhon o Kowshik' *Anandabajar Potrika*, 19 September 2019]

[17] Sarbari Roychoudhury, Somnath Hore, and a little later Ajit Chakrabarty, Sanat Kar, Suhas Ray, Lalu Prasad Shaw one after the other.

This is also the time when Visva Bharati Adhyapak Sabha – the teachers' association - was born. Led mostly by the left-leaning academicians within the university teaching community, it was formed in 1969 to protect their rights against the authoritative attitude of the administration.[18] Visva Bharati authority lost no time in declaring the sabha illegal and suspended a Bangla and an Economics adhyapak. And, for the first time in the history of Visva Bharati the teachers protested in a sit-in demonstration in front of Udayan, inside which the members of the executive committee took the decision. Students joined later ; the members were stuck inside and compelled to withdraw the order.[19]

A part of the Visva Bharati student community was actively involved in the short-lived Naxalite movement and a large number of Visva Bharati teachers organised themselves to form Adhyapak Sabha as a democratic platform to fight against injustice. But such politically charged and socially turbulent time and movement did not have any significant impact on Kala Bhavana teacher and student community.

Adhyapak Sabha remains active till today. But Naxalite movement was successfully supressed by the state - both centre and state - within a short period. Soon a state of Emergency was declared

[18] Visva Bharati was declared a central university in 1951 and came under direct control of the elected central government of India. The central government at that point in time was headed by – the prime minister of India and chancellor of Visva Bharati - Indira Gandhi.

[19] কুন্তল রুদ্র, 'রবীন্দ্রনাথকে সর্বার্থে হৃদয়ে নিয়েছিলেন সোমেন্দ্রনাথ', *গণশক্তি,* ০১ এপ্রিল ২০২২, কলকাতা দ্রষ্টব্য। [Kuntal Rudra, 'Robindronath-ke sorbarthe hridaye niyechhilen Somendronath' *Ganashakti,* 01 April 2022, Kolkata]

by the President of India on 26 June 1975. The state of Emergency continued till 1977 and Kowshik retired in 1978 - a year after the Left Front came to power in West Bengal.[20]

During the end of Kowshik's principalship, a significant number of senior students of Kala Bhavana found this formal, 'style'-forming, 'language'-oriented art education totally inadequate to relate to the world meaningfully. They felt closer to the original project of Kala Bhavana involving practice of relating art to life, making art rich with elements of Nature and society : making art a part of public life. On the other hand, with the experience of the Naxalite movement, establishment of the Left Front rule in West Bengal in 1977 and an exposure to Marxist philosophy of art and society, they felt uncomfortable in the isolated space of studio, gallery and a handful of specialized viewers.

Facing the larger world and the professional art field after finishing their courses, most of them realized that it was impossible to create a sphere of relevant art practice outside this professional world individually in isolation. A collective initiative was necessary to make this practice work effectively. Pinaki Barua, Ramprasad Bhattacharya, Rati Basu and Suranjan Basu thus decided to live at Pinaki's house in Kolkata ; they worked together at Pinaki's studio for a brief period in 1982-83. Meaningful discussions on

[20] Dinkar Kowshik, incidentally, died as the Left Front rule came to an end in 2011. Somendronath Bandyopadhyay, one of the two teachers suspended in 1969 by the Visva Bharati authority of which Kowshik was a part and Somnath Chatterjee, a former Communist Party of India (Marxist) member and speaker of the Indian parliament spoke highly of him in the condolence meeting organized by Kowshik's family at his residence in Santiniketan.

contemporary art practices, their unhappiness about it as well as possible active responses to it continued and shared with other friends. There was a strong urge for the like-minded friends to come together. Scattered around India - Kolkata, Delhi, Bengaluru, Thiruvananthapuram, Port Blair and Santiniketan - they started communicating between themselves from the mid-1982.

Suranjan and Ramprasad, Kala Bhavana campus. 1979

The Artistic Seekers

By 1983-84 a number of them were relocated in Delhi : Amit Mukhopadhyay, Nirmalendu Das, Rati Basu, Sumantra Sengupta, Suranjan Basu and Sushanta Guha. They met regularly in Delhi to discuss about the possibility of forming an artists' group of like-minded friends whose artistic concern was rooted in Man and

Society. Initially there was a proposal to hold an artists' camp at Somnath Hore's residence under his supervision at Santiniketan. The camp planned to include ten artists, a photographer and an art historian - all former student of Kala Bhavana and an architect. They wanted to use this opportunity to have an interactive gathering, but for some organisational inefficiency, this did not materialize. They, however, decided to bring friends from different places and organise a gathering at Santiniketan to exchange views, show their works, talk about a possible course of action to make their art practice lively and truly connected to life. Many of them, including a few non-artist friends, gathered at Santiniketan in May 1984 for about 4-5 days. The bonding between them, of course, was not merely ideological and political, they were firmly connected on the basis of love and friendship.

There was a large number of them in this first gathering, later to be reduced as some of them did not feel comfortable with the idea or did not believe in the practice of art based on Marxist ideology. Those who gathered in this first gathering were, Aloke Adhikari, Alok Som, Amit Mukhopadhyay, Nirmalendu Das, Nitai Majumdar, Pinaki Barua, Prabir Biswas, Pulak Dutta, Ramprasad Bhattacharya, Rati Basu, Siddhartha Ghosh, Sitangshu Mukhopadhyay, Sugata Hazra, Sujit Ghosh, Sumantra Sengupta, Suranjan Basu, Sushanta Guha and Tapan Mitra. Those who generally agreed to the idea, decided to meet again the next year and explore it further.

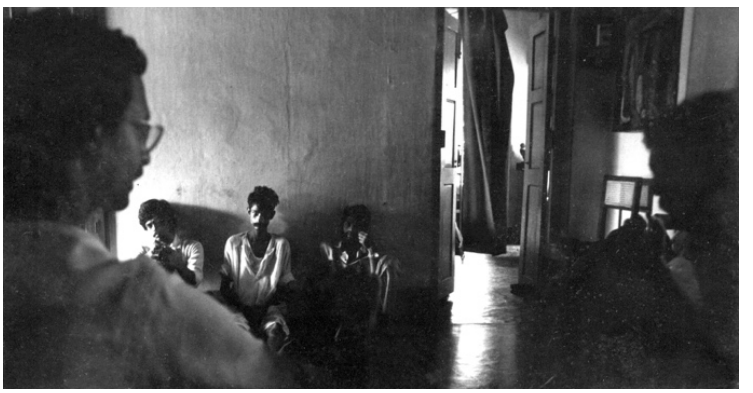
After this first gathering, they planned to hold an exhibition of their works at the Jehangir Art Gallery in Mumbai ; planning and

discussion continued to explore the possibility of holding a joint artists' camp in Andamans with the local artists ; they also thought of holding a show at Kala Bhavana in December, as many of them would be around Santiniketan during their winter holidays. There were exciting plans but nothing materialised except the show at Nandan gallery, Santiniketan which took place on 27, 28 and 29 December 1984.[21] The primary aim to hold the show was to present their ideological position along with their works to the Kala Bhavana community. A meeting was organised to have a critical discussion on the works exhibited. Many viewers who took part in the discussion found a gap between the works and the ideology of the group. The discussion, thus, continued with another session. This process of directly communicating with the viewers was of much help to them. Apart from organising this show, documentation of works of art from across the world was undertaken particularly in Delhi covering the whole year. They photographed works primarily of artists of the socialist countries and works which could be categorized as art of protest, from the books and catalogues available in libraries and individual collections.

The summer gathering of 1985 was organised as an artists' camp on woodcut. It was held at Suranjan's ancestral residence at Dokkhinpolli, Santiniketan from 25 May to 06 June ; most of the participants lived there together. They worked on individual wood blocks with subject of their own choice and simultaneously had

[21] This 'informal' exhibition included works of Nirmalendu Das, Nitai Majumdar, Pinaki Barua, Prabir Biswas, Pulak Dutta, Rati Basu, Siddhartha Ghosh, Sumantra Sengupta and Suranjan Basu.

discussion sessions on works of Mexican muralists and artists from different socialist countries as well as their own works. Heated arguments went on with disagreements, even occasionally bordering on a physical encounter, but ended up not only in a deeper understanding of each other but also in the joy of being together.



Amit, Nitai, Suranjan and Narayan.
Summer camp, May 1985, Dokkhinpolli. *Photo : Pinaki Barua*

Sushanta, Suranjan and Rati at work. Summer camp,
May 1985, Dokkhinpolli. *Photo : Pinaki Barua*

With a conscious effort to free their works from the individual mannerism they had developed, the camp ended with a large – approximately 5 feet by 18 feet - black and white scroll painting made jointly by the participants.[22] For this, they thought of painting the events, their own lives were passing through. Beginning from the left end, the scroll chronologically moved towards the right end. Depicting their life as student in the far left, the painting moved on to narrate their lives in big cities they landed up in, after finishing their studies, at the centre of the picture frame ; and finally, an urge to do something meaningful together which led to meeting of them at this artists' camp was painted at the right end of the scroll. A sincere attempt was made to negotiate between personal practices both formally as well as thematically and establishing harmony between different attitudes and strategies of execution. This also was a practice that helped them to unlearn the style-forming, personal image-making training they received at the art colleges.[23]

Before the end of the gathering it was decided that close observation of Nature and life, sketching and drawing from life situation on the spot and emphasizing on the context that led to social events would be practiced. Responsibilities were distributed among themselves regarding visual documentation of works, realist

[22] Rati Basu, one of the members of the group introduced this kind of collective art making project earlier with the children at the schools she was teaching at in Delhi. Rati continued with the practice throughout her later teaching life at Santiniketan.
[23] Those who participated in this artists' camp were, Amit Mukhopadhyay, Narayan Sutradhar, Nirmalendu Das, Nitai Majumdar, Pinaki Barua, Prabir Biswas, Pranjala Gill, Pulak Dutta, Ramprasad Bhattacharya, Rati Basu, Suranjan Basu, Sushanta Guha and Tarit Bhattacharya.

Pinaki and Suranjan working on the collectively painted scroll. Summer camp 1985, Dokkhinpolli.
Photographer unknown

in nature ; studying philosophy and history of art and learn about specific conditions under which important art movements across the world were born. It was particularly important for them to study the artistic activities in different parts of India during the colonial

Collectively painted scroll, *We,* 1985. 5'x17.35'

Collectively painted scroll, *The Saw Mill,* 1986. 5'x18'

period. This, they believed, would help them to develop their own practice historically and aesthetically relevant.

By the summer of 1986, some of them working in Thiruvananthapuram, Bengaluru and Delhi, returned to Santiniketan. Nirmalendu joined Kala Bhavana in 1984 and Pulak joined Patha Bhavana in 1986 as teachers ; Suranjan and Rati returned home in 1986, leaving their teaching job at high schools in Delhi. Alok Som moved to Santiniketan a little later. Prabir was already there teaching at Kala Bhavana. Pinaki lived and worked in Kolkata ; two other friends lived in Kolkata, too - Debabrata Dutta, a filmmaker attached to the film industry of Kolkata and Sugata Hazra, a geologist teaching at the Jadavpur university. Because of Kolkata's close proximity to Santiniketan, opportunities to meet, discuss and engage in collective activities took place more frequently as never before.

The first two days of this year's summer camp was held at one of their teachers, Kanchan Chakraberti's university quarters at Andrews Polli on 25 and 26 May 1986 and shifted later to Suranjan-Rati's house in Dokkhinpolli at Santiniketan ; the camp continued till 05 June 1986. Everybody decided to concentrate on making a single scroll together like last year and not produce any individual work during the camp. They visited a saw mill across the railway track in Bolpur every day, observing and sketching the activities of the workers, the mill's manager, the clients and the general ambiance of

the mill. In the process they could also closely watch the mechanical functioning of the sawing machine and the physical condition under which the workers used this machine. Ready with images sketched live on the spot as well as notes on the life at the mill, they got down to work collectively on a large scroll on the life within the saw mill. Here, unlike the one last year where emotional and personal elements dominated, the scroll took a well-thought-out form as they chose to work on an external situation, forcing them to look at it as objectively as possible.

Preparation of cheap and light mounting for the works for travelling exhibitions. Dokkhinpolli, July 1986.

Nirmalendu and Suranjan

Suranjan and Rati

Other activities followed as they were now in a better position to organise : a portfolio of ten woodcut prints titled *The Saw Mill* [24] was published. On 04 October they put up a short-duration show at Bolpur Girls' School and on 21 November an outdoor exhibition of their works at a political gathering organised by RSP, celebrating

[24] Participating artists : Alok Som, Nirmalendu Das, Pinaki Barua, Prabir Biswas, Pulak Dutta, Rati Basu, Sujata Mukherjee, Suranjan Basu, Sushanta Guha and Tarit Bhattacharya. A text on the project accompanied the folio.

November Revolution at Tejganj, Bardhoman was organised. Apart from these two shows, another exhibition, larger than last year covering the whole gallery space at the ground floor, was held at Nandan gallery, Santiniketan in December 1986.

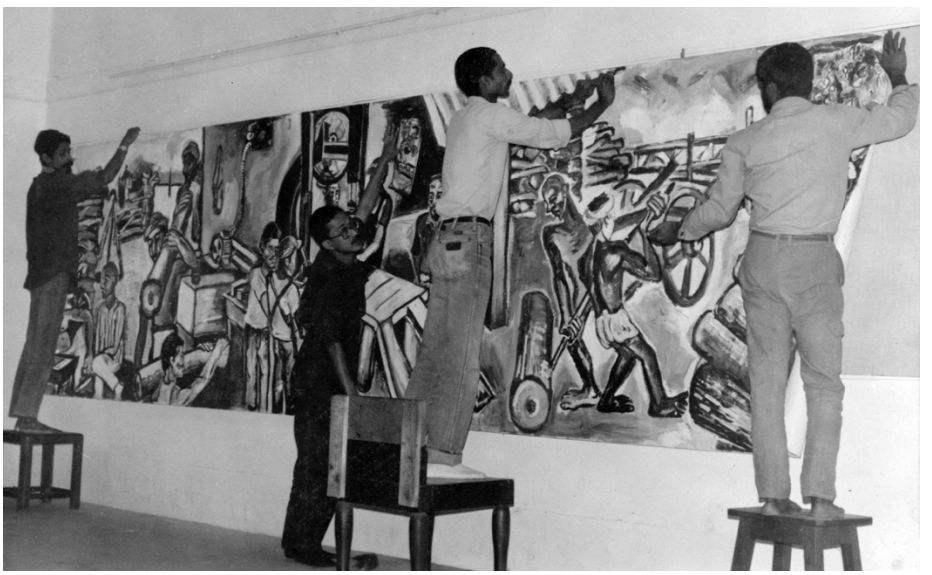
Bolpur Girls' School, 04 October 1986

Nirmalendu and Suranjan

Suranjan, Prabir and Pulak

Tejganj, Bardhoman. 21 November 1986

Alok Som and Hirak [a friend]. Tejganj, Bardhoman. 21 November 1986



Suranjan, Pinaki, Pulak and Alok displaying collectively made scroll 'The Saw Mill'. Nandan, Kala Bhavana, December 1986. Photographer unknown

Pinaki, Prabir, Alok, Pulak and Suranjan. Nandan, Kala Bhavana, December 1986. *Photographer unknown*

1986 ended with putting up a stall at the annual fair, *Poush mela* at Santiniketan at the end of December ; calendars, greeting cards with original signed prints, terracotta works as well as drawings and paintings made live at the stall were sold from this stall. Subsequently individual original works were displayed and sold from the stall, too. They named the stall 'Sandhane' [In Search].

This involved an experiment to pull colour linocut prints from an etching press. Nirmalendu's small etching press was brought to Suranjan's residence at Dokkhinpolli. Alok Som, Nirmalendu, Pinaki, Prabir, Pulak and Suranjan with an architect friend, Jyotirmay Adhya helping them, worked on it from 22 October to 02 November 1986 and successfully produced desired number of colour

linocut prints for calendars. With the right amount of tack reducer, they could reduce the amount of ink rolled on the surface and using a plyboard window to hold the linoleum sheet, managed to reduce the pressure of the iron roller on the surface as well. As a result, the linoleum sheet remained unbroken and did not expand ; the thin layer of ink also prevented it from bleeding. This, together made it possible to produce large number of prints without any problem with registration ; on the other hand, the print, even with multiple layers of ink remained light.

Nirmalendu, Suranjan and Pinaki

Pulak, Pinaki and Jyotirmay

Calendar printing, Dokkhinpolli, October-November 1986

Suranjan, Alok and Pinaki

Jyotirmay, Pinaki and Prabir

Calendar printing, Dokkhinpolli, October-November 1986

Next year the summer camp began on 01 June and continued till 15 June 1987 at 'Suropuri', Prabir's residence in Ratonpolli, Santiniketan. They lived together, sang and argued and cooked and worked together. Excited with the success of their experiment with colour linocut prints in large editions, they planned to produce a colour linocut portfolio of their works during this year's summer camp. The woodcut folio produced last year used only one impression of black that was hand-rubbed by the artists working in their private working spaces ; but the subject was external to their daily experiences – *The Saw Mill*. This year they decided to work together with a fixed duration and reflect on a subject that everybody was close to - *Servant Maid-Servant*.[25] It was technically challenging and exciting as each work involved around five different colour impressions from multiple blocks. It would not have been possible without this well-coordinated team work and extraordinary collective spirit to achieve what they did achieve on both aesthetic and technical level.

Rati, Nirmalendu, Pinaki and Suranjan. Summer camp. June 1987.

[25] Participating artists : Alok Som, Nirmalendu Das, Nitai Majumdar, Pinaki Barua, Prabir Biswas, Pulak Dutta, Ramprasad Bhattacharya, Rati Basu, Suranjan Basu and Sushanta Guha. The accompanying text was written by Amit Mukhopadhyay

Summer camp. June 1987, Suropuri, Ratonpolli

Suranjan and Alok

Pulak and Rati

Nitai and Ramprasad

Suranjan and Prabir

Finding ways to reach the common people through art was one of the greatest challenges for them. To achieve that, all of them felt that although exhibiting their works in big city galleries was important for a variety of reasons, it was more important to show their works at small suburban and rural spaces. It was important to interact with the local community, outside the circle of specialised gallery viewers, and learn about their responses to art. Accordingly Alok, Pulak and Suranjan participated in an artists' camp held in Uttorpara ; they produced linocuts with other participating artists on the spot so that the whole process could be witnessed and enjoyed by

the visiting viewers. A show of 22 small works, specially framed for this kind of travelling exhibitions, along with 10 linocut prints from the Uttorpara camp were shown at the annual festival of 'Rhyme Nattogoshthi' [Theatre group] at Pallobpukur, Howrah on 20 and 21 June. This show also included reproductions of Käthe Kollwitz's woodcuts and Somnath Hore's bronze sculptures.

They utilized their Puja holidays for the preparation of the *Poush mela* stall so far. But, as many members were located at different cities, they missed the opportunity to take part in this process of art making. They, therefore, decided to turn their summer camp of 1988 into a workshop for the preparation for the mela stall.

Many of them could visit Santiniketan during the *mela* but those who could not come in December missed the opportunity to interact with the general buyers and gallery-free viewers.

L a l b n a d h S t u d i o

In the midst of an ordinary mixed village community

After returning to Santiniketan in 1986, Pulak established his studio at a rented place in Lalbnadh village adjacent to Santiniketan. A number of Adivasi families migrated and settled here a long time ago. Later, a growing number of Biharis arrived ; a few Bengali families also made Lalbnadh their home. A Japanese and an American music student built a compound in Ramon Marandi's land attached to their own house at Lalbnadh in around 1982 and lived there till about 1986

before they left for home after finishing their studies at Santiniketan. The compound has two independent tiled-roof brick rooms – one on the west and the other on the north. On the eastern side there is another tiled-roofed mud house with two rooms ; and a separate unit of kitchen and bathroom. This compound belongs to Ramon Marandi, a Snaotal. Pulak hired the room on the west - this eventually turned into the group's workplace later sometime in 1987. Nirmal's small etching press along with Rati-Suranjan's potters' wheel were installed at the studio. There is a spacious courtyard at the centre which made this place ideal for gathering and discussing and singing and spending time together. This place put a new life into their activities – friends and artists from around the world as well as the villagers visited and interacted with the artists and their activities in this quiet village space. The studio was run by the fund collectively generated through annual contributions made by those who could afford and from the profit from *mela* stall and other sources.

Indrani [Pinaki's wife], Pinaki, Rati, Nirmal and Arnab [Rati's son] on his lap. Lalbnadh studio, October 1987

Nirmalendu, Suranjan, Sourojit [a friend] and Alok Som.
Calendar printing, Lalbnadh studio, October 1987

Sometime later Alok Som moved to one of the rooms at the mud house in this compound ; he was thus able to make full use of the collectively run, fully equipped studio. Alok had a close association with a particular activist group. These activists-artists then started visiting the compound and gradually started using the studio and its materials without the consent of the group. Instead of going for a confrontation with these outsiders, the members of the group decided to meet to settle the matter peacefully. To avoid any further worsening of the situation and also, to save money for their upcoming exhibition in Kolkata, it was collectively decided at the meeting that the studio be closed immediately, which they did within a few days sometime in 1989. They then shifted the materials to their

respective locations. Alok, by this time had already made a distance from the group, but with this he finally severed all connections with the group for good.

This year the camp started on 01 June 1988 at their Lalbnadh studio. Theme-based colour linocut calendars were produced. There were four sets ; two artists worked on each subject to produce four four-page calendars. The subjects were : *Education system today, Jatra at village, Life of a tree* and *Seasons.*[26]

For the past few months, those who lived in Santiniketan, built a simple kiln using brick and mud within the studio complex themselves.

Prabir, Rati and Pulak, Kiln making. Lalbnadh 1988 Photo : Suranjan Basu

[26] *Education system today :* Nirmalendu Das and Pulak Dutta, *Jatra at village :* Suranjan Basu and Sushanta Guha, *Life of a tree :* Debabrata Dutta and Pinaki Barua, *Seasons :* Alok Som and Rati Basu,

Pulak and Rati, Kiln making. Lalbnadh 1988 *Photo : Suranjan Basu*

Nirmalendu, Sushanta and Pinaki.
Summer camp, Lalbnadh studio, June 1988

Rati and Suranjan. Lalbnadh 1988

Nirmal's small etching press was already installed at their Lalbnadh work place and now Rati-Suranjan's potter's wheel was installed at the studio premise. The plan was that everybody would work with clay - which was prepared and ready for the purpose - making terracotta objects for sale in the *mela*. But by the time they completed the linocut works, torrential rain started pouring continuously for a few days making the leaking studio space impossible for any activity. The newly built mud-brick outdoor kiln got happily drenched and as it enjoyed the shower, finally melted down.

This was also the most delightful moment for them : the arrival of monsoon following a burning summer of Santiniketan. The summer in Santiniketan reaches its highest temperature in May-June. They would work from morning through evening in this heat,

sometime with power cuts, particularly in the hottest hours of the day. Sitting together on the floor in a circle with all the windows and doors closed to protect themselves from the heat, they would enjoy their rice-lunch. It used to be a freshly cooked simple vegetarian lunch with local flavour and taste. Work continued after the lunch break till the sun leaned down on the west reducing the intensity of the heat. All of them then cycled down to some open-air small tea stall in nearby villages - a practice reminiscent of their art college days – have *alur chop, pnyaji, muri* and *cha,* chat and sing before they returned with a sense of fullness. And each year the last part of the camp inevitably coincided with the arrival of the monsoon. This

Nirmalendu, Nitai, Rati, Suranjan, Alok, Pinaki and Sushanta.
Goalpara tea stall, June 1987

pulled them out in the open. Shedding all inhibitions, they would go totally crazy and enjoy the rain like a child ! There was a feeling of a concrete connectedness with Nature as they walked bare-footed on the mud in flowing rain water and soaking themselves in the rain water pouring down from the sky.

The annual camps used to end with a spicy goat meat dinner cooked by themselves, accompanied by drinks and songs, nonsense conversations and laughter.

In their regular discussion sessions during the camp, it was observed that most of their works were primarily addressed to the educated and thinking 'general' public. Although some of them did engage in working on the condition of the lower-toiling class, the intended viewers largely remained the educated middle class. The idea of the *Poush Mela* stall was to reach these viewers-buyers and to a large extent, it proved to be the most successful of their collective activities. All of them felt that it was impossible to reach the lower-class people without changing their present lifestyle, the possibility of which was quite remote for the moment. Instead, to make their work have a meaningful impact, they decided to concentrate on viewers consisting of people of their own kind and class. At the same time they realized that their collective activities were gradually reducing to just one artists' camp and a *mela* stall a year ; they, therefore, thought of increasing such activities spread over the year. Accordingly, there were plans to display their works at public places, publish leaflets with text and images for distribution and so on. It

was also necessary and useful for them to interact with the viewers ; they knew through their own experiences of the learning possibility, such interactions are capable of opening up.

'Sandhane', Poush mela. December 1986. *Photo : Pinaki Barua*

Pulak, Debabrata, Sumantra, Suranjan and Sushanta.
'Sandhane', Poush mela, December 1987. *Photo : Pinaki Barua*

Suranjan, Debabrata and Shubhashis [a friend]. 'Sandhane', Poush mela.

Photographer unknown

Nirmalendu at far right. 'Sandhane', Poush mela.

Photographer unknown

Poush Mela Stall: Beyond profit making

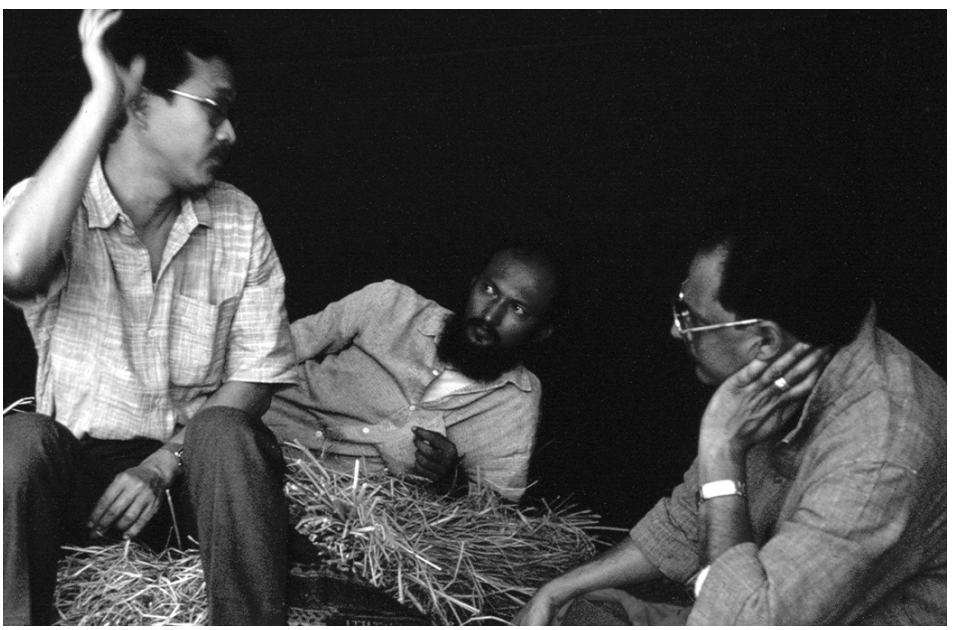
Poush Mela stall exposed them to the most varied responses. This large *mela* brings a cross-section of people from villages around Santiniketan as well as people with urban background from across the world. It also put them into serious dilemma. Since most of them were trained as printmakers, they had lots of edition prints lying in their homes. They decided to sell them at a very low price so that those who could not afford to buy them from a commercial gallery could collect them from here. The crowd at the *mela* was generally thin in the lunch hour ; in one such afternoon a sophisticated lady in *sari* visited the stall with a male assistant. She sat on the *morha* kept next to the bunch of prints and took a very long time to select the prints. She bought a large number of prints priced at 15 to 25 rupees each. Some of them recognized her as the owner of a well-known commercial gallery in Kolkata. They felt defeated and found it very difficult to sell the prints to a person it was not meant for. They had to accept it quietly as they realized that once you put anything for sale in an open forum like this *mela*, you cannot possibly select your buyers.

Next year or the year after next, a gentleman in *payjama-panjabi* came to the stall immediately after the stall opened on the first day. He wanted to buy all the terracotta pieces - this time they gently refused and he did not argue.

'Sandhane' Poush mela, 1987. *Photo : Pinaki Barua*

Terracotta display at 'Sandhane'. Poush mela.

Sumantra at work. 'Sandhane', Poush mela. Photographer unknown



Pinaki, Debabrata and Nirmalendu in conversation. 'Sandhane', Poush mela.

Sushanta, Debabrata, Pulak and Suranjan singing.
'Sandhane', Poush mela 1986. *Photo : Pinaki Barua*

But there was much more than making and selling art objects around the *mela* stall. Selecting the spot for the stall on the *mela* ground, decorating the stall for a few days before the *mela* started, changing the visual look of the stall every year, opportunity to interact with viewers and buyers of different background, long *adda*s with old friends and former students of Visva Bharati who made this stall a meeting point, experiencing the early morning activities of the ephemeral *mela* community after spending a cold night at the stall and so on made them so excited and enthusiastic about it. And counting the money collected after each day's sale was a very pleasant experience as that supported their activities throughout the year. At the same time, it was funny that whoever was in charge of the

accounts could never manage to come up with a straight balance sheet, as a result 'miscellaneous' as an entry found its permanent place in the balance sheets. This remained the case for their other activities, too.

Pulak, Suranjan and Nirmalendu.

Nirmalendu Suranjan and Debabrata

Working hard with the accounts after the mela. 'Sandhane', Poush mela.

The Realists

As the need to face criticism - which helps develop a deeper communication with the viewers - increased, they decided to hold their first professional gallery show in Kolkata. And, after six years of working together, exploring areas of possible visual intervention, experimenting with different techniques, mediums and content, navigating through differences and disagreements with one another, this exhibition was finally held in January-February 1990 at the Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata. In addition to their individual

works, the exhibition included two large collective works as well as two portfolios and some selected works from the calendars.[27]

For the purpose of exhibiting as group, founded on ideological ground, they were looking for an appropriate name to identify themselves with and most of them agreed on calling their group *The Realists.* The second exhibition was held at the same venue with a special section on problems of communalism from 19 November to 01 December 1991. Their third and the last exhibition was held at Jehangir art Gallery, Bombay in December 1994.

All regular activities like summer camp and *Poush mela* and so on were suspended in 1989 to concentrate on their individual works and for the preparation for their upcoming exhibition in Kolkata. From 1990 the annual summer camp and the *Poush mela* stall continued for a few more years.

Against Artists' Group

Principles of modernism encourage achievement-oriented individualistic and competitive art practices, giving preference to artists' group, which is an addition of individual artists with their personal interests. A collective, on the other hand, attempts to create harmony between individual artists and engages in ideology-politics-

[27] The participating artists were : Nirmalendu Das, Nitai Mazumdar, Pinaki Barua, Prabir Biswas, Pulak Dutta, Ramprasad Bhattacharya, Rati Basu, Sukanya Banerjee, Sumantra Sengupta, Suranjan Basu and Sushanta Guha. A text about the initiative was written by Amit Mukherjee, and published as *The Realists (A way of Seeing*) by Sujata Mukherjee from Durgapur on the occasion.

driven activities. This, inevitably leads to practicing culture, collective in nature and directed towards the people.

The culture Bengal practiced for a long time was collective in nature and vibrant with people's art as distinct from 'popular art' : art directed towards people, created by the people or art with full public access. They took the form of *Pawt*s and terracotta temples, of weaving and manuscript decorations, of *Kirtan*s and *Pnachali*s, of *Alpona*s and *Brotokatha*s, of *Jatra*s and *Kathokatha*s, of *Baul*s and *Sufi*s. They were cultural manifestations of the countless minor religious sects and cults active in everyday life of the people and had their roots in *Lokayata, Tantra, Kapalik, Kalchakrayan, Goudiya Vaishnavism, Sahajiya* and so on.[28] All of them acknowledge, to a greater or lesser degree, the significance of the external material world as the real world. Art practice, therefore, springs from the quality of human consciousness that is in constant and active relationship with the external world. Initially founded on the Vedic and Upanishadic world-view and social order, Santiniketan and Kala Bhavana, in particular, learned a great deal from these socio-aesthetic movements of Bengal as Santiniketan gradually started evolving into a more heterogenous entity.

Collective engagements with cultural practices on the one hand, and art directed to be a part of public life on the other, inspired

[28] See Shashibhusan Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults as Background of Bengali Literature,* University of Calcutta. 1946

this group of artist-friends who studied in the 1970's Kala Bhavana, to take a different path for their own practices.

One of the fundamental natures of human beings has been established as its collective spirit : resistance to centrally governed society and challenging arbitrary power led to formation of societies which lived without centralized power. Archaeological excavation at mega-sites in Ukraine, for instance, revealed that this large human settlement lived there for about eight centuries from 4100 to 3300 BC without a king. Or, the human settlement without overlords or kings at Teotihuacan in Mexico (100BC to 600 AD) more than 1000 years before the arrival of the Spanish. Living, to them, did not mean only to obey orders or filling in forms. Human societies have been organised differently over a long period of time : different structures developed, practiced and also dropped. There were also societies which lived seasonal social life with different forms of governance at different time of the year. They happened across a long space of time back and forth in human settlements throughout the world. Conscious political decisions led to collective governance at places far apart in space and time, before almost the whole human world very recently got stuck to the present form of social organisation : of state and nation.[29]

Closer both in time and space to us, one is reminded of societies in South Asia which functioned without a centralized

[29] See David Graeber, David Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity,* Allen Lane, Great Britain, 2021.

power.[30] Rabindranath, for instance, thought a community founded on 'social harmony' had a root in our own land. To him, spontaneous interaction between 'self-regulated' members of the community, he called *samaj,* as against a community ruled from the top, is the basis of these communities.[31] He, as we know, tried to build such communities in a limited scale first in Silaidaho and later in Santiniketan and Sriniketan.

Human society and culture today are largely based on the use of fossil fuel and almost totally dependent on the techno sphere. Man, supposedly the only conscious and most intelligent creature on earth, is now compelled to address the question of habitability on earth as it is deeply affected by human action, i.e., mindless use of fossil fuel and technology. Continuous humanocentric actions are disturbing the earth system. A reorientation of human thought structure had to be developed to understand the crisis as well as its possible solutions.[32] This led historians to include the study of deep history as part of their field of study, just as earth system science include social science and politics as part of their scientific inquiry. Stretching the political thought beyond the human world has now become a necessity.[33] Under such condition, practice of art must necessarily reorient itself to remain relevant and responsible. Many

[30] See Aditya Nigam, 'Theorizing the Political: *Mandala* and the Social Polity', *Decolonizing Theory: Thinking across Traditions,* Bloomsbury, New Delhi, 2020.
[31] See Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism*, Sisir Kumar Das [Ed.], The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Vol. II, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 2004.
[32] See Tim Lenton, *Earth System Science*: *A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, 2016.
[33] See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2021.

believe that part of that process would be to positively respond to man's collective nature.

In 1970's and 1980's non-urban Santiniketan, there were still a few people left to respond to this basic nature of human being - togetherness and its fundamental binding component, love. This artists' collective being one of them thus developed a practice of functioning which spontaneously rejected anything remotely related to 'authority'. Sincere efforts were made to collectively address and neutralize any attempt at personal ambitions towards leadership and power within the collective. Integrational functioning that makes such an endeavour possible inevitably spills over to their social life involving the human as well as the nonhuman world.

Four years of joyful engagement with working collectively enriched their life which, made their individual art practices lively in turn.

Birbhum landscape. 2011

D O C U M E N T S

Somnath Hore's letter to Suranjan Basu. 07.03.1984

Activity and Summer Camp Report 1982-1985

Summer Camp Report 1986

Summer Camp Report 1987

Summer Camp Report 1988

Exhibition Communication, Nandan 1986

Exhibition Invitation, Nandan 1986

Selected Documents from Accounts Books etc.

Somnath Hore's letter to Suranjan Basu. 07.03.1984

শান্তিনিকেতন
৭.৩.৮৪

স্নেহের সুরঞ্জন,

তোমার ২৫/২ তারিখের চিঠি যথাসময়ে পেয়েছি, নির্মলের কাছে সব খবর জেনে তোমাকে লিখব ভেবেছিলাম, কিন্তু সম্প্রতি ওর চিঠিতে জানলাম, ও কবে আসবে ঠিক নেই, Camp সম্পর্কে আমি খুব হালকা ভাবে ভেবেছিলাম, মনে হয়েছিল — ৪/৫ জন মিলে দুটি বাড়িতে কাজ করলে মন্দ কী! নির্মলের সঙ্গে কথা বলে মোটামুটি ৮ জনের কথা ভাবা হয়েছে। সংখ্যার দিক থেকে আর বাড়ানো ঠিক হবে না, কারণ, হাজার হোক বাড়ি ত? বাড়ির কতগুলি চাহিদা থাকে। তা ছাড়া আমাদের দুজনেরই বয়স হয়েছে, আজকাল খাটুনি এবং বিশ্রামকে ভাগাভাগি করে নিতে হয়, সেজন্য ভেবেছি — সকালে কয়েকঘণ্টা এবং সন্ধ্যায় কয়েকঘণ্টা কাজ করলে মন্দ হয় না, সন্ধ্যায় কাজের জন্য বিশেষ আলোর ব্যবস্থা যেমন হ্যাজাক রাখা যেতে পারে, অনেক লোক হলে চিন্তা অনবরত যারা অংশগ্রহণ করছে না, তারা ভিড় করলে কাজ এবং শান্তির ব্যাঘাত হবে, এগুলোর আগে এগুলি আমাদের ভেবে নিতে হবে,

আলকাজিকে এখনই এর মধ্যে না জড়ালেই ভাল, জড়ালে ব্যাপারটা অনেকটা জঞ্জাল হয়ে দাঁড়াবে, জিনিষপত্রের যা খরচ তা আমরা মিলিত ভাবে বহন করব, Zinc plate, acid, ground, resin, Turp, Kerosene — এগুলি সংগ্রহ করতে হবে, প্লেট এবং আরও কিছু জিনিষ কলকাতা থেকে সংগ্রহ করতে হবে, পিনাকী এবং তপন এ দিকে সাহায্য করতে পারে, আমার প্রেস বড় নয়, কাজেই প্লেটের সাইজ ছোট রাখতে হবে।

(২)

আমরা যদি তিন থেকে চার সপ্তাহ কাজ করি তাহলে প্রত্যেকে গড়ে ২খানি প্লেট ভালভাবে করতে পারি। আসলে ভাল কাজ করাটাই প্রয়োজন, ফোলিও আকারে বের করতে হলে ছাপার কাজ পরে করতে হবে, সেটা পূজোর ছুটি কিম্বা পরবর্তী কোন সময় হতে পারে। শ্রীনিকেতন গরমের সময় আমাদের জন্য বিশেষ কাগজ তৈরী করতে পারবে না, ভাল surface পেতে হলে felt কিনে দিতে হবে। আমার কাছে কিছু জাপানী কাগজ আছে। এগুলি শক্ত আছে কিন্তু দেখতে অত ভাল নয়, এ বিষয়ে আমরা ~~একসঙ্গে~~ ক্যাম্পের সময়ে একসঙ্গে বসে ঠিক করে নিতে পারি। কারণ, সকলের মিলিত মতামত এবং পছন্দে কাজ ভাল হবে।

আমরা আগামী ২২শে এপ্রিল দিল্লী রওনা হব বলে টিকেট কেটেছিলাম, কিন্তু সম্প্রতি চন্দনার স্বাস্থ্য খারাপ যাচ্ছে। সম্ভবত: জণ্ডিস হয়েছে। ২/১ দিনের মধ্যে বোঝা যাবে, যদি তাই ~~হলে~~ হয়, আমরা স্থগিত রাখব, কারণ জণ্ডিসের পরবর্তী সময় খুব সাবধানে থাকতে হয়, Emeritus Fellowship পাওয়াতে আরও কিছুদিন ভাল ভাবে কাজ করার সুযোগ পেলাম, কিছুদিন হল মোম নিয়ে নাড়াচাড়া করছি – ইচ্ছে কিছু ব্রোঞ্জ করবো।

প্রদর্শনীর সময় তোমাদের সঙ্গে জীবনের কয়েকটি অমূল্য দিন কাটিয়েছি, বড় ভাল লেগেছে।

আশা ~~ক~~ করি তোমরা দুজনে ভাল আছ, সাবধানে থেকো, ভালবাসা জেনো, সোমনাথদা

Somnath Hore's letter to Suranjan Basu. 07.03.1984

Santiniketan
Sneher Suranjan, 7. 3. 84

Received your letter dated 25/2 in time. I was planning to write to you after getting all the updates from Nitai. But came to know, from his recent letter, that he is not sure about when he can visit Santiniketan. I envisaged the camp to be a very homely and informal one. Thought it would be nice for 4/5 of us to work together at home during the vacation. After discussing with Nirmal, we thought the number of participants can be more or less 8. We should not increase the number any more. After all, it is a home and it has its own requirements. Moreover, both of us have reached mature age. We, therefore, need to distribute our times between work and rest nowadays. It would be nice to work in the mornings as well as in the evenings for a few hours. A special light for working in the evenings such as *Hyajak* (Petromax) can be organized. Work and peace of mind will be disturbed if there are too many participants or a constant flow of non-participant visitors. We must sort these out before moving ahead.

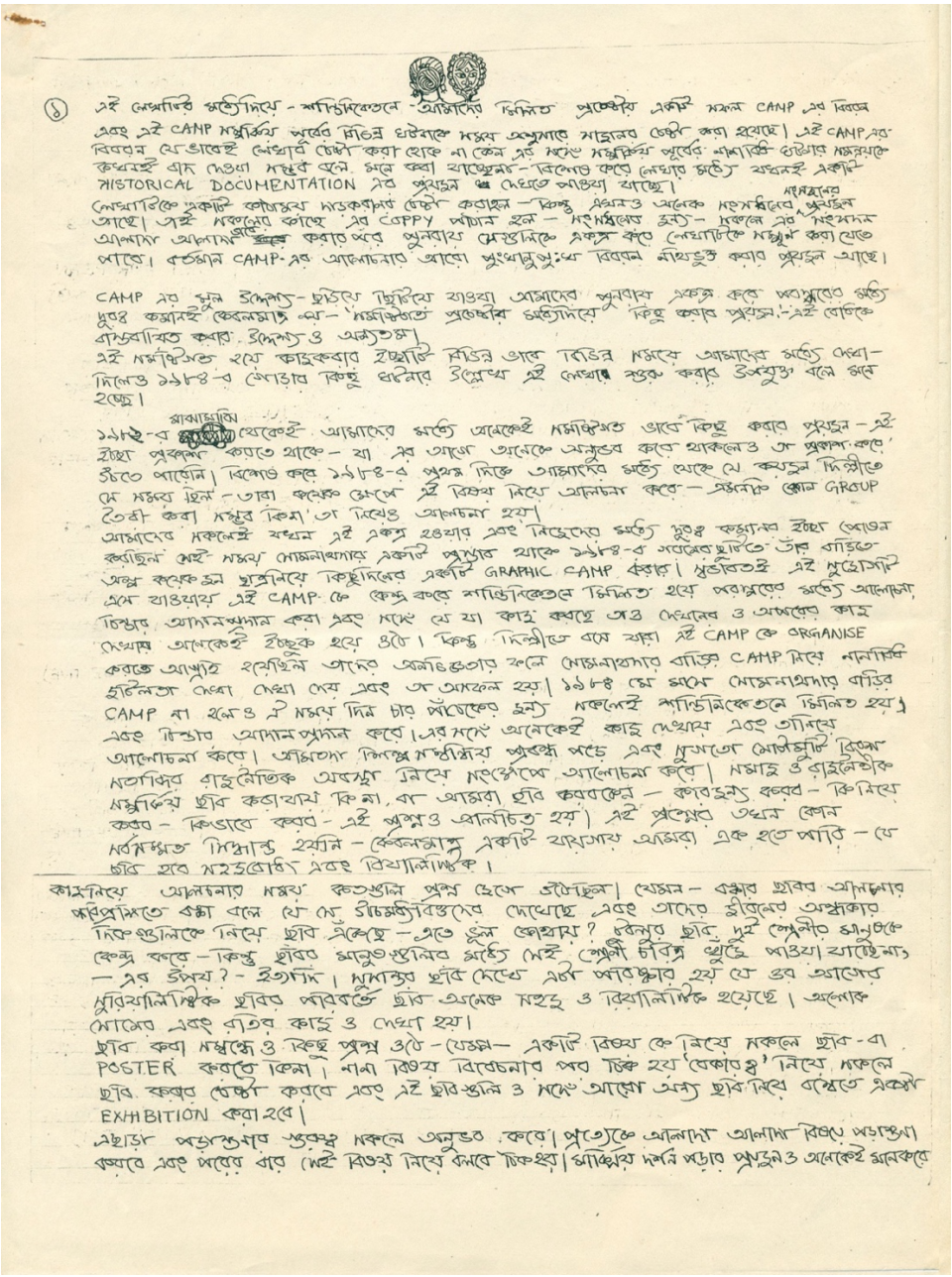
It will not be right to get Alkazi involved in this project at this stage. It will become more formal if we do that. We will bear the cost of materials together. Will have to collect zinc plate, acid, ground, resin, turpentine and kerosene. Plate and a few other materials will have to collected from Kolkata. Tapan and Pinaki can help in this. The size of my press is not big. So, the size of the plates should be kept small.

If we work for three to four weeks, then we can comfortably work on two plates each on an average. The idea is to produce good works. Printing should be done later if we want to publish it in a form of a folio. That can be done during Puja holidays or later. Sriniketan will not be able to make special papers for us in summer. Will have to buy them felt to get a good surface. I have some Japanese papers. They are strong but doesn't have a good look. We can decide on the matter together during the camp. Because the collective views and choices of all of us will create good works.

We bought tickets to visit Delhi for 22 April. But lately Chandana's[34] health is not doing well. Most probably it is jaundice. Will come to know about it within next couple of days' time. We will postpone our trip if that is the case. Because one needs to live very carefully after having jaundice. Getting Emeritus Fellowship gave me the opportunity to work comfortably for some more time. Playing with wax for some time now – intending to make some bronzes. Spent some precious time of my life with you all during the exhibition.[35] Felt very happy. Hope both of you are doing well. Take care. With love, Somnath-da

[34] Somnath's daughter.
[35] Somnath's show in Delhi organized by Art Heritage. *Somnath Hore—A Retrospective*, 1983–84. Etching, lithograph, sculpture. Art Heritage and Shridharani Gallery.

Activity and Summer Camp Report 1982-1985



(২) এ সত্ত্বেও আলোচনা তেমন ভাবে ORGANISED ছিল না, পারস্পরিক আস্থা বিশ্বাসের অভাব ছিল। মিলিত হওয়ার ঘটনাটি হঠাৎ করে হয়ে যাওয়ায় অনেকের কাছেই পরিষ্কার হয়নি ব্যাপারটা কি ঘটছে এবং ভবিষ্যতে কি ঘটতে পারে। এছাড়া শান্তিনিকেতনে সকলে ছড়িয়ে ছিটিয়ে থাকায় আলোচনা এবং চিন্তার আদান প্রদান কখনই সুষ্ঠু ভাবে হয়ে ওঠেনি। এর পরেও সকলে এটুকু বুঝেছে যে সকলেই 'কিছু' একটা আন্তরিক ভাবে করতে ইচ্ছুক, এই — 'কিছু' টি কি, তা কারোর কাছেই ততটা পরিষ্কার ছিলনা।

যারা এই সময় একত্র হয় - তারা হল — তপন মিত্র, প্রবির বিশ্বাস, অমিত মুখার্জি, নির্মলেন্দু দাস, পিনাকি বড়ুয়া, নিতাংশু মুখোপাধ্যায়, পুলকদত্ত, রামপ্রসাদ ভট্টাচার্য্য, সুগতো হাজরা, সুজিত ঘোষ, নিতাই মজুমদার, অলোক সোম, অলোক অধিকারি, সিদ্ধার্থ ঘোষ, সুসান্ত গুহ, রতি বসু, সুরঞ্জন বসু, সুমন্ত্র সেনগুপ্ত।

MAY 1984 = DECEMBER 1984

বন্ধের EXHIBITION ORGANISE করার দায়িত্ব প্রথমে নিতাই পরে দিল্লীতে যারা ছিল তাদের উপর ন্যাস্ত হয়। এই EXHIBITION এর জন্য সকলের কাছথেকে কাজের PHOTOGRAPHS এবং BIODATA চেয়ে পাঠান হয় — এর মধ্যে যতোগুলো কাজের PHOTOGRAPHS এবং BIODATA পাওয়া যায় ততগুলি মাহাসিংর ARTGALLERY তে পাঠান হয়। কিন্তু তার কোন POSITIVE RESPONSE পাওয়া যায়নি এবং GALLERY BOOK না হওয়ায় EXHIBITION বাতিল করা হয়।

DECEMBER .... থেকে .... পর্যন্ত তিনদিনের জন্য শান্তিনিকেতনে কয়েক জনের RECENT কাজ নিয়ে একটি INFORMAL EXHIBITION এর আয়োজন করা হয়। কলাভবনের EXHIBITION HALL এই একটি আলোচনা সভার ও বন্দবস্ত করা হয় যাতে ছাত্রছাত্রি এবং কলাভবনের শিক্ষকেরা ও অংশগ্রহন করেন। এই আলোচনা সভায় আমাদের মূল ভূমিকা ছিল — আমাদের চিন্তাভাবনার দিকটা কাজের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে সকলের মাঝে তুলে ধরা। এই আলোচনার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে ছাত্রছাত্রিদের মন্তব্য — আমাদের কথায় এবং ছবিতে মিল কম। ছাত্রদের সঙ্গে পুনরায় আলোচনায় বসা হয়। এই EXHIBITION-এ নির্মলদা, প্রবিরদা, পিনাকিদা, সিদ্ধার্থ, নিতাই, সুমন্ত্র, পুলক, সুসান্ত, রতি, সুরঞ্জন অংশগ্রহন করে।

25 MAY = 6 JUNE 1985

আগে থেকেই সিদ্ধান্ত হয় এই বারে সকলে একত্র হলে — তাকে একটি ARTISTS' CAMP এর রূপে আয়োজন করা হবে। ফলে ঠিক হয় এই বারের CAMP কোন এক নির্দিষ্ট যায়গায় হবে — যেখানে সকলে একসঙ্গে থাকা, খাওয়া এবং কাজ-আলোচনা করবে। সকলের সুবিধা অসুবিধার কথা বিবেচনার পর ঠিক হয় যে মাসের ২৫ তারিখ থেকে নিয়ে জুন মাসের ৫ তারিখ পর্যন্ত শান্তিনিকেতনে WOOD CUT এর CAMP করা হবে। সুরঞ্জনদের বাড়ি CAMP এর জন্য ব্যবস্থা করা হয়। এই ব্যবস্থার ফলে এইবারের CAMP অনেক সুষ্ঠু ভাবে সংগঠিত হতে সক্ষম হয়। এই CAMP-এ যারা অংশগ্রহন করে, তারা — প্রবিরদা, অমিতদা, নির্মলদা, পিনাকিদা, নিতাই, রজত, পুলক, সুসান্ত, রতি, টুবলু; এছাড়া নতুনদের মধ্যে ছিল — তড়িৎদা, প্রাঞ্জলা এবং নারায়ন। গত বছর অংশগ্রহনকারিদের মধ্যে থেকে সুমন্ত্র, অলোক সোম, অলোক অধিকারি, সিদ্ধার্থ, সুগতো, সুজীত এবারের CAMP-এ অংশগ্রহন করতে পারেনি।

CAMP এর প্রথমে স্থির করা হয় কাজ এবং আলোচনা একসঙ্গে চলতে থাকবে। WOOD CUT করা সম্বন্ধে স্থির হয় — বর্তমানে যে যেভাবে কাজ করছে সে সেই ভাবেই কাজ করবে, কোন COMMON বিষয় ঠিক করে কাজ করা হবেনা।

CAMP এর প্রধান ACTIVITY:-

১। একটি করে WOOD CUT করা। ২। প্রত্যেকের নতুন কাজ দেখা ও আলোচনা করা ৩। SOCIALIST COUNTRY-র PAINTING & GRAPHICS এবং MEXICAN MEURALS এর SLIDE দেখা। ৪। সম্মিলিত ভাবে একটি বড় SCROOL DRAWING। ৫। GENERAL DISCURSSION, DISCURSSION ON FUTURE CAMP & GROUP ACTIVITY.

১। 12"X15" SIZE এর গামার কাঠে সকলে WOOD CUT করে। প্রত্যেকে যে যার নিজের মত

(৩) বিষয় এবং ধরনেই কালসাদায় কাজ করে, যদিও এই কাজ করতে গিয়ে একটি বিশেষ অসুবিধা সকলে বোধকরে – যা এতোদিনের একা কাজ করার অভ্যাসের দরুন বা CAMP এর দলগতের বাতাবরনে বসে INDIVIDVALY কাজ করায় অসুবিধা বোধের দরুন। ফলে কেউই এই WOOD CUT-এ তেমন মনযোগ দিতে পারেনি।

২। সুশান্ত, নির্মলদা, সিমাকিদা, রীতা, নিতাই, বুবিলুর নতুন কাজ দেখা হয়। অলোক সোমের PAINTING এর SLIDE ও দেখা হয়। নতুনদের মধ্যে তড়িৎদা এবং প্রাঞ্জলার কাজ দেখা হয়। তড়িৎদা বিচ্ছিন্ন অবস্থার মধ্যে থেকেও এবং প্রতিকুল অবস্থায় পড়েও যে নিয়মিত কাজ করে গেছে তা প্রত্যেককে মুগ্ধ করেছে।

৩। কলাভবন থেকে SLIDE PROJECTOR বন্দবাস্ত করা হয়। EAST EUROPEAN CONNTRY-র PAINTINGS, GRAPHICS এবং MEXICAN MEURAL এর SLIDE দেখার মধ্যে দিয়ে CAMP এর শুরু। BULGARIAN WOOD CUTS, ROMANIAN PAINTINGS & GRAPHICS, POLISH PAINTINGS, HUNGARIAN GRAPHICS & PAINTINGS, RUSSIAN PAINTINGS & GRAPHICS সকলের ভাল লাগে। এটা সকলে অনুভব করে যে ছবিগুলি আন্তরিকতার সঙ্গে আঁকা, ছবি রঙে উজ্জ্বল ও সহজ — জীবনের প্রতি মমতা ভালবাসা ও সার্থকতার প্রকাশ শোষিত শ্রেণীর মানুষদের দুঃখ যন্ত্রনা এবং প্রতিবাদ ছবির অন্যতম বিষয়। MEXICAN MEURAL এর ভাষার জোর এবং সার্থক ব্যবহার তার রাজনৈতিক, সামাজিক বিষয় পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে সকলকে আকর্ষিত করে। ছবির মধ্যে রাজনৈতিক, সামাজিক সমস্যা প্রকাশের সার্থক উপায় ও প্রয়োজন আলোচিত হয়।

৪। CAMP-এর প্রথম কয়দিন WOOD CUT করা হয়। ক্রমে নানাবিধ আলোচনার মধ্যে দিয়ে আমাদের ছবি করার অভ্যাস সম্পর্কিত কতগুলি পরিকল্পনা নিরিক্ষা স্থির করা হয়। এমন ভাবে ছবি করা যা আমাদের এতোদিনের যতরকম অভ্যাস, কিছুটা MANNER-এর পর্যায়ে গিয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে — তার থেকে মুক্ত হয়ে। মুক্ত হতে গেলে ছবিকে অনেক বেশি OBJECTIVE হতে হবে এবং কতগুলি বিশেষ ভাবে ছবি আকার চেষ্টা বা অভ্যাস বা পরিকল্পনানিরিক্ষার দরকার। এরফলে কতগুলি কর্ম পদ্ধতি স্থির করা হয় যা আমাদের সকলকে ব্যক্তিগত MANNARISM এর বাইরে বার করে এনে MANNAR মুক্ত COMMON ভাষার দিকে (যা স্বভাবতই হবে অনেক বেশি OBJECTIVE) নিয়েযেতে সাহায্য করবে। এই বিভিন্ন পরিকল্পনানিরিক্ষার মধ্যে একটি — 'সম্মিলিত প্রচেষ্টায় কোন একটি নির্দিষ্ট বিষয়কে নিয়ে ছবি করা'। ফলে CAMP-এর শেষের কয়দিন (JUNE 2 – JUNE 6) যে কয়জন উপস্থিত ছিল সকলে মিলে একটি বড় কাগজের উপর আমাদের COMMON কোন বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতার মধ্যে থেকে কোন বিষয় নিয়ে যৌথ প্রচেষ্টায় ছবি করব ঠিক করা। আমাদের CAMP-কে বিষয় হিসাবে স্থির করা হয়। এই DRAWING টি রচনায় প্রধানত সিমাকিদা, সুশান্ত, নির্মলদা, নিতাই, রীতা এবং বুবিলু অংশ গ্রহন করে। অমিতাভ এবং বড়ুও DRAWING টি রচনা পদ্ধতিকে OBJECTIVE ভাবে সম্পন্ন করার সাহায্যে বিভিন্ন আলোচনায় যোগদানের মধ্যে দিয়ে ছবিটি রচনায় অংশগ্রহন করে।

ছবিটির বিষয়কে কতগুলি পর্যায়ে ভাগ করা হয়েছে। প্রথম অংশে ±1980 সাল পর্যন্ত আমাদের কলাভবনের সহজ নির্ভাবনাই জীবন — এখানে রচনা ও অনেক সহজ ভাবে সাজান। এর পর শান্তিনিকেতন ত্যাগের পর শহুরে জীবনের একাকিত্ব এবং অত্যন্ত বেশি ব্যক্তিকেন্দ্রিক হয়ে যাওয়া - যদিও মানুষকে আরো কাছ থেকে দেখা — এখানে রচনা অনেকটা ঝড়ের সমুদ্রের মত উত্তাল। ছড়িয়ে ছিটিয়ে যাওয়া মানুষগুলোর আবার একত্র হওয়ার প্রচেষ্টা এবং 1984 মে মাসে শান্তিনিকেতনে মিলিত হওয়া পরবর্তি অংশে স্থান পেয়েছে। এর পরের ভাগে 1984 'মে' থেকে 1985 'মে' পর্যন্ত এই সময়ে যে যার মত পড়াশুনা এবং ছবি আঁকার মধ্যে দিয়ে নতুন কিছুর অনুসন্ধান করা এবং শেষ অংশে 1985 'মে' পুনরায় মিলিত হওয়া এবং CAMP এর বিবরন চিত্রিত হয়েছে। বাঁ দিক থেকে শুরু করে একের পর এক পর্যায়ে বিষয়গুলি ছবিটির ডান দিকে এগিয়ে গেছে SCROOL PAINTING এর মতন। ছবিটির ব্যবহারিক দিকের কথা ভাবা হয়েছে CAMP এবং তার পূর্বের বিভিন্ন ঘটনার ঐতিহাসিক গুরুত্বের কথা মনে রেখে DOCUMENTATION করার মধ্যে দিয়ে, যদিও ছবিটি শুরু করার সময় যতটা DETAIL ও OTHENTIC DOCUMENTATION করার কথা ভাবা হয়েছিল করতেগিয়ে কিন্তু ততটা সম্ভব হয়নি।

(৪) (ক) GENERAL DISCUSSION - এর প্রধান সফল ফল আমাদের নিজেদের মধ্যে সম্পর্ক সচ্ছ এবং ঘনিষ্ঠ হওয়া, আমাদের সমষ্টিগত ভাবে এগোনর প্রয়োজন বোধ আরো দৃঢ় ও সুষ্ঠ হওয়া এবং সমষ্টিগত ভাবে এগোনর পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে কতগুলি পরিক্ষানিরিক্ষা স্থির করা

আমাদের কোনরকম MANIFESTO-র প্রয়োজন এই মুহূর্তে আছে নাকি তা আলোচিত হয় — এবং স্থির হয় এই মুহূর্তে আমাদের MANIFESTO-র প্রয়োজন নেই।

আমাদের পুরান শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার কল্যানে যে অভ্যাস গুলি একটি MANNARIST STYLE এর জন্ম দিয়েছে তাকে কাটানর জন্য কতগুলি অভ্যাসের বা পরিক্ষানিরিক্ষার প্রয়োজন - পূর্বেই আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। এই সংক্রান্তিয় কতগুলি প্রয়োজনীয় অভ্যাস ও পরিক্ষা নিরিক্ষা ঠিক করা হয়।:—

(ক) প্রত্যেকেই NETURE ও LIFE থেকে SKETCH ও DRAWING এর উপর ঘোর দেবে। এর জন্য প্রয়োজনে SPOT এ গিয়ে কোন এক ব্যক্তি বা ব্যক্তি সমষ্টি বা সময়, ঘটনাকে তার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে OBSURVE করে SKETCH, DRAWING, PAINTING ইত্যাদি করবে। অর্থাৎ ঘরে বা STUDIO-এ বসে ছবি না এঁকে বাইরের জীবনে ছড়িয়ে পড়তে হবে।

(খ) সকলে পড়াশুনা চালিয়ে যাবে। এই প্রসঙ্গে ভারতের ও পৃথিবীর শিল্পের ইতিহাসের গতিপ্রকৃতি আমাদের ভালভাবে STUDY করে ANALISSIS করতে হবে। ফলে বর্তমানে আমরা কি ধরনের ছবি আঁকবো তা বুঝে নিতে সাহায্য হবে। এই পড়াশুনা সমষ্টিগত প্রচেষ্টায় হবে — অর্থাৎ একেকজন বা কয়েকজন মিলে এক একটি বিষয় নিয়ে পড়াশুনা, ANALISSIS এবং DOCUMENTATION এর কাজ চালিয়ে যাবে সমগ্র দলের প্রয়োজনে। দিল্লীতে যারা রয়েছে তারা স্যোসালিস্ট দেশের এবং পশ্চিমের শিল্পের উপর কাজ করবে এবং প্রয়োজন DOCUMENTATION চালিয়ে যাবে। কোলকাতায় পিনাকিদা — 'ক্যালকাটা গ্রুপ'-এর উপর কাজ করবে এবং DOCUMENTATION করবে বা রবিন্দ্রভারতির COLLECTION-এর DOCUMENTATION করবে। নারু এবং তড়িৎদা MADRAS MUSEUM এবং ঐ অঞ্চলে যে সমস্ত BENGAL SCOOL সময়ের কাজের নিদর্শন বা COLLECTION পাবে তার উপর STUDY এবং DOCUMENTATION করবে নিতাই ত্রিবান্দ্রম-এ যা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ 'মেটিরিয়াল' পাবে তার DOCUMENTATION করবে এবং পুরান PRINTS এর উপর তথ্য সংগ্রহ করবে। এছাড়া যে যখনই কিছু মূলবান তথ্য বা বিষয় পাবে তার সংগ্রহ বা STUDY করবে।

পড়াশুনা অর্থাৎ ভারতের ও বাইরের শিল্পের ইতিহাসের গতিপ্রকৃতি STUDY এবং ANALISSIS করা কালিন আমাদের যে সমস্ত SLIDES, PHOTOGRAPHS বা অন্যকোন প্রকার DOCUMENT এবং লেখা যাই করা হবে তা আমরা আমাদের সকলের কাজের জন্য কোন এক জায়গায় আর্কাইভের মত করে জমা করব। এই STUDY এবং DOCUMENT করা কালিন যা খরচ হবে তা যে যার বহন করবে এবং পরে কেউ যদি আরেদাগাতে চায় তবে তার আর্কাইভের মেটিরিয়ালের প্রতি কোন দাবি বা অধিকার থাকবে না।

(গ) প্রত্যেক বার CAMP এ একটি করে COLLECTIVE WORK হবে — এবং CAMP এর আগে থেকেই কাজটি কি বিষয়ের উপর হবে এবং কি ভাবে করা হবে তার মোটামুটি খসড়া তৈরী করা হবে। একদুই জন এর উপর এই খসড়াটি তৈরীর দায়িত্ব থাকবে — এবং সকলে মিলিত হলে তাই নিয়ে আলোচনার মধ্যে দিয়ে কাজটা করা হবে। পরের বার কাজটিকে কি করে আরো সফল করা সম্ভব তার উপর চিন্তা ভাবনা সকলে করবে।

সকলে যে যা কাজ সঙ্গে নিয়ে গেছিল, তার থেকে দুটি করে কাজ নির্মলদার কাছে রেখে দেওয়া হয়েছে — ও যখন শিলং যাবে N.E.H.U-তে তখন ঐ কাজগুলো সুবিধামত EXHIBITION করতে চেষ্টা করবে।

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এবারেও পূর্ব নির্ধারিত তারিখ অনুযায়ী আমাদের একত্রিত হয়ে আলোচনা
শুরু হয় ২৫শে মে - কাঞ্চনদার বাড়িতে। এবারের CAMP-এ যারা আসতে
পেরেছিল তারা হল - অমিত, প্রবীর, নির্মল, জাড্ডু, পিনাকী, অলোক ঘোষ,
সেন্টু, রবি, নাড়ু, টুবলু, সুশান্ত, রতি, সুব্রত। সকলের পক্ষেই, পুরো ক্যাম্প
থাকা সম্ভব হয়নি — অনেককেই আগে চলে যেতে হয়েছে অথবা পরে
আসতে হয়েছে। কবে কোথায় কি ভাবে আমরা মিলিত হব তা অনেক পূর্বেই
সকলকে জানানো হয়েছিল — কিন্তু তা সত্ত্বেও কেউ কেউ অপরিহার্য কারনবশত
আসতে পারেনি — যেমন — বাবলু, নিতাই, রঞ্জিত, বঙ্কা। টুবলুর বাড়িতে
কোন অসুবিধা না থাকায় এবং কাঞ্চনদার বাড়িতে বিশেষ অসুবিধা
থাকায় আমরা সবাই মিলে কাঞ্চনদার বাড়ি থেকে টুবলুর বাড়িতে
চলে আসি ২৭ তারিখে।

বিভিন্ন বিষয়ে বিস্তারিত আলোচনার প্রয়োজন আছে মনে
করায় এবারে সবাই আলাদা ভাবে কোন কাজ করেনি, সবাই মিলে
একসাথে, আগের বারের মতই, একটি বড় কাজ করা হয়েছে। একসাথে
কাজ করার বিভিন্ন সমস্যার ভিত্তিতে বেশ কিছু আলোচনার পর ছবি
করার বিষয় ও পদ্ধতি সম্বন্ধে সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়ে তার ভিত্তিতে ছবি শুরু
এবং শেষ করা হয়।

যেসমস্ত বিষয়ের ক্ষেত্রে ব্যক্তিগত আবেগ প্রবণতার প্রভাব বেশী —
(যেমন: যুদ্ধ, শান্তি, দুর্ভিক্ষ ইত্যাদি) সেসমস্ত বিষয়বস্তু বাদ
দেওয়ার কথা স্থির করা হয় — কারন তাতে ব্যক্তিগত মানসিক
প্রতিক্রিয়ার ছাপ আলাদা আলাদা ভাবে ছবিতে এসে বৈষম্যের
সৃষ্টি করতে পারে। একসাথে কাজ করার এই প্রাথমিক স্তরে তাই একটি
বিশেষ কর্মকান্ড অথবা জায়গাকে ভিত্তি করে ছবি আঁকার কথা স্থির
হয়। সেইজন্য পূর্বপল্লীর রেল লাইনের ওপারে একটি কাঠ চেরাইয়ের
কারখানায় গিয়ে সবাই মিলে কিছুদিন SKETCH ও বিভিন্ন অংশ খুঁটিয়ে
STUDY করা হয়, এই বিশেষ কারখানার পরিবেশকেই আমাদের ছবির
মধ্যে ফুটিয়ে তোলার চেষ্টা করা হয়। ছবি শুরু করার আগে মোটামুটি
ভাবে ছবির কাঠামো কিরকম হবে তাই নিয়ে আলোচনা করে ঠিক
করে কাজ শুরু করা হয়। যারা আগের বারেও একসাথে কাজ করেছে
তাদের মতে — এবারের ছবি দাঁড় করাতে অনেক কম সমস্যার সম্মুখীন
হতে হয়েছে। কাজেই যুক্তিসঙ্গত ভাবে ভাবা যেতে পারে যে এই বিশেষ-
ভাবে অর্থাৎ একই ছবি অনেকে মিলে আঁকায়, আমরা নিশ্চই কিছুটা
এগিয়েছি।

এছাড়া নিম্নলিখিত বিষয় নিয়ে আলোচনা ও সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হয়: —

১। <u>RESEARCH & DOCUMENTATION</u> — সমাজ এবং সময়ের গতিতে
আমাদের নিজেদের স্থান নির্দিষ্ট
করার জন্য, ইতিহাস জানার এবং বোঝার প্রয়োজনীয়তা সবাই অনুভব করে।
ঠিক হয় আমাদের নিজেদের ছবি আঁকার খাতিরেই আমাদের জানতে
হবে ইতিহাস — বিশেষ করে ঊনবিংশ এবং বিংশ শতাব্দীর ভারতবর্ষের
শিল্প ইতিহাস — যে কাজ আমরা মনেকরি এখনও অসম্পূর্ণ রয়ে
গেছে। বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন জায়গায় কিরকম শিল্পকর্ম অথবা
শিল্প-আন্দোলন চলছে তার সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ রাখা এবং তাকে
বিশ্লেষনের মাধ্যমে নিজেদের কাজে লাগানোর জন্য প্রয়োজন
DOCUMENTATION-র কাজ চালিয়ে যাওয়া — (VISUAL & WRITTEN
DOCUMENT সংগ্রহ করা)।

২। <u>শিল্প-কেন্দ্রিক কর্মপদ্ধতি</u> — নিজেদের বিশেষ কর্মক্ষেত্রের কথা এবং
বর্তমান শিল্প-ধারা এবং শিল্পীদের
কর্মকান্ডের কথা বিবেচনা করে একটি সমান্তরাল শিল্প-আন্দোলনের

দিকে এগোনর প্রচেষ্টার প্রয়োজনীয়তা সম্বন্ধে সকলে একমতে আসে।

ক) ছবিকে সাধারণ মানুষের কাছাকাছি এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়া :- ছবিকে শুধুমাত্র বড়বড় শহরে বা শিল্প-প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রদর্শনীর মধ্যে না রেখে শহরতলী ও গ্রামে আমাদের ছবি নিয়ে গিয়ে প্রদর্শনী করা স্থির করা হয়। এই সূত্রে ছবিকে পারিপার্শ্বিক-সচেতন, দুর্বোদ্ধতামুক্ত ও সহজ-সরল করার কথাও আলোচিত হয়। এর মানে অবশ্যই এমন নয় যে আমরা বড় শহরে প্রদর্শনী করবনা অথবা আমাদের ছবিতে INTELLECTUAL ELEMENT একদমই থাকবে না অথবা আমরা জটিল সমস্যা বা মানসিক অভিজ্ঞতা নিয়ে ছবি করব না — এ সব করার প্রয়োজনীয়তার কথাও আলোচিত হয়।

খ) সমান্তরাল শিল্প-আন্দোলন :- যেখানে আছি তার আশেপাশের জায়গায় গিয়ে সেখানকার বিশেষ বিশেষ জায়গা নিয়ে, সেই-জায়গার বিশেষ সমস্যাকে ভালভাবে বুঝে তার ওপর ছবি করা — তাকে নিয়ে সেখানেই প্রদর্শনী করা, দর্শকদের সঙ্গে কথাবার্তা বলার মধ্যে দিয়ে ছবিকে বড় শহরের প্রদর্শনীকক্ষ থেকে বাইরে নিয়ে গিয়ে সমান্তরাল শিল্প-আন্দোলনের দিকে এগোনোর কথা ভাবা হয়। এরসঙ্গে সামান্য সরকারী অর্থানুকূল্যে (DAILY WAGE BASIS) বিভিন্ন জনবহুল জায়গায় (STATIONS, POST OFFICE, বাজার, গ্রামের স্কুল ইত্যাদি) দেওয়াল চিত্র করার সম্ভাবনার কথাও ভাবা হয়।

৩। আমাদের এই কজনকে নিয়ে এখুনি একটি দল গঠন করা যেতে পারে কিনা সে কথা বিবেচনা করা হয়। ঠিক হয়, আমরা যেভাবে কাজ করতে চাই সেইভাবে এক নির্দিষ্ট কর্মসূচীর মধ্যে দিয়ে বছর খানেক কাজ করে তার ভিত্তিতে আলোচনা করে স্থির করা হবে দল গঠন করার কথা। এইসূত্রে একই বিষয় নিয়ে সবাইকার করা উড-কাটের একটি ফোলিও তৈরী করার সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হয়। এগুলি বিক্রির পর লাভের টাকা DOCUMENTATION এবং প্রদর্শনী ইত্যাদির খরচায় লাগানো হবে বলে ঠিক হয়। উড্‌কাটের বিষয় স্থির হয় "কাঠচেরাই-য়ের কারখানা"।

৪। শিল্প-আন্দোলনের খাতিরে সবারই কাছাকাছি থাকার বিশেষ প্রয়োজন। আপাতত শান্তিনিকেতনে প্রবীর-নির্মল-নাড়ু-রতি-টুবলু আর কলকাতায় পিনাকী-অলোকসোম-রবি-দেবু থাকায় এদের ওপর দায়িত্ব দেওয়া হয় এবছরের কর্মসূচী স্থির করা, প্রদর্শনীর ব্যবস্থা করা এবং তৎসংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় কাজ এবং, সবথেকে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ, কাজের পরিবেশ তৈরী করা যাতে সম্পূর্ণভাবে, আন্তরিকভাবে ও গভীরভাবে নিজেকে কাজের মধ্যে ডুবিয়ে রাখা যায় ও সচেতনভাবে ছবি নিয়ে চিন্তাভাবনা ও পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষা চালান যায়।

৫। আমাদের চিন্তাভাবনা এবং কাজ করার রীতির ভিত্তিতে একটা কথা সবার কাছেই পরিষ্কার যে আমাদের কর্মকাণ্ড কোনভাবেই বৃহত্তর সামাজিক আন্দোলনের থেকে বিচ্ছিন্ন হতে পারেনা। এবং আমাদের এর মধ্যে থেকেই কাজ করতে হবে। রাজনৈতিক দলের সঙ্গে সরাসরি যোগাযোগের সম্ভাবনা নিয়ে আলোচনা হয় — ঠিক হয় যেহেতু আমরা এখুনি রাজনৈতিক কর্মকাণ্ড সম্বন্ধে যথেষ্ট সচেতন বা যুক্ত নই সেইহেতু এখুনি সরাসরি যোগাযোগের প্রশ্ন ওঠেনা তবে আমাদেরকে সচেতনভাবে এই আন্দোলনকে বুঝতে

(৩)

হবে বলে সবাই মনে করে। এই আলোচনার ভিত্তিতে স্থির হয় যে সবাই রাজনৈতিক আন্দোলন ও সামাজিক আন্দোলন নিয়ে পড়াশুনা করব ও এইসব কাজে ঘনিষ্ঠ ভাবে যুক্ত, এমন লোকজনের সাথে যোগাযোগ রাখব।

ক্যাম্পের পর আজ তিনমাস কেটে গেছে - পূর্বনির্ধারিত কার্যসূচী অনুযায়ী আমরা প্রায় কিছুই করে উঠতে পারিনি। উড্‌কাটের ফোলিও-র টাকা, প্রদর্শনীর খরচা বাবদ টাকা। এখনও সব পৌঁছয়নি, আমতদার কাছে যথাসময়ে প্রুফ্‌প্রিন্ট পৌঁছে দিইনি, সবার ফাইনাল প্রিন্ট টুবলুর কাছে যথাসময়ে পৌঁছয়নি। এখনও অবধি একটা প্রদর্শনীর ব্যবস্থা করা সম্ভব হয়ে ওঠেনি, যদিও কাজ সবারই বাধাই করে প্রদর্শনীর জন্য তৈরী হয়ে আছে। এটাকে আমরা আমাদের চরম ব্যর্থতা হিসেবেই দেখছি। আমাদের সকলের এব্যাপারে আরো অনেক শ্রদ্ধাবান হওয়ার প্রয়োজন।

আমরা যারা এবার CAMP-এ হাজিরছিলাম তারা সবাই একটি বিশেষ অসুবিধার মুখোমুখি হয়েছি - যেমন, - যেহেতু আমাদের CAMP বছরে একবারের জন্য হয় সেই জন্য আমাদের সবাইকে সচেষ্ট হতে হবে যাতে ব্যক্তিগত সমস্যা কাটিয়ে এই কয়েকটি দিন আমরা কাছাকাছি আসতে পারি। দ্বিতীয়ত: যেহেতু CAMP এর সময় খুবই সীমাবদ্ধ সেই জন্য আমরা সবাই প্রথম থেকে একত্রিত হতে না পারলে আমাদের আসল উদ্দেশ্য নিঃসন্দেহে ব্যর্থ হবে। দীর্ঘ অপেক্ষা করতে হয় কাল এ আসবে পরশু সে আসবে। যারা দেরী করে আসে তাদের জন্য আবার প্রথম থেকে শুরু করতে হয়। এই সমস্যা আমাদের কাটিয়ে উঠতেই হবে। ব্যক্তিগত সমস্যার ঊর্দ্ধে CAMP-কে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করার চেষ্টা আমরা করব।

ক্যাম্প-সংক্রান্ত লেখা সম্বন্ধে কারো কিছু পরিবর্তিত বা পরিবর্ধিত করার থাকলে জানাতে অনুরোধ করা হচ্ছে। এমন লেখা তৈরী করা সত্যিই কঠিন কাজ, কাজেই অনেক কিছু বাদ পড়া বা অসম্পূর্ণ থাকাটা প্রায় স্বাভাবিক। সকলকেই এব্যাপারে সক্রিয়ভাবে সাহায্য করতে অনুরোধ করা হচ্ছে।

যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা -

সুরঞ্জন বসু
C/O বিদ্যুৎরঞ্জন বসু
দক্ষিণ পল্লি
শান্তিনিকেতন
৭৩১২৩৫

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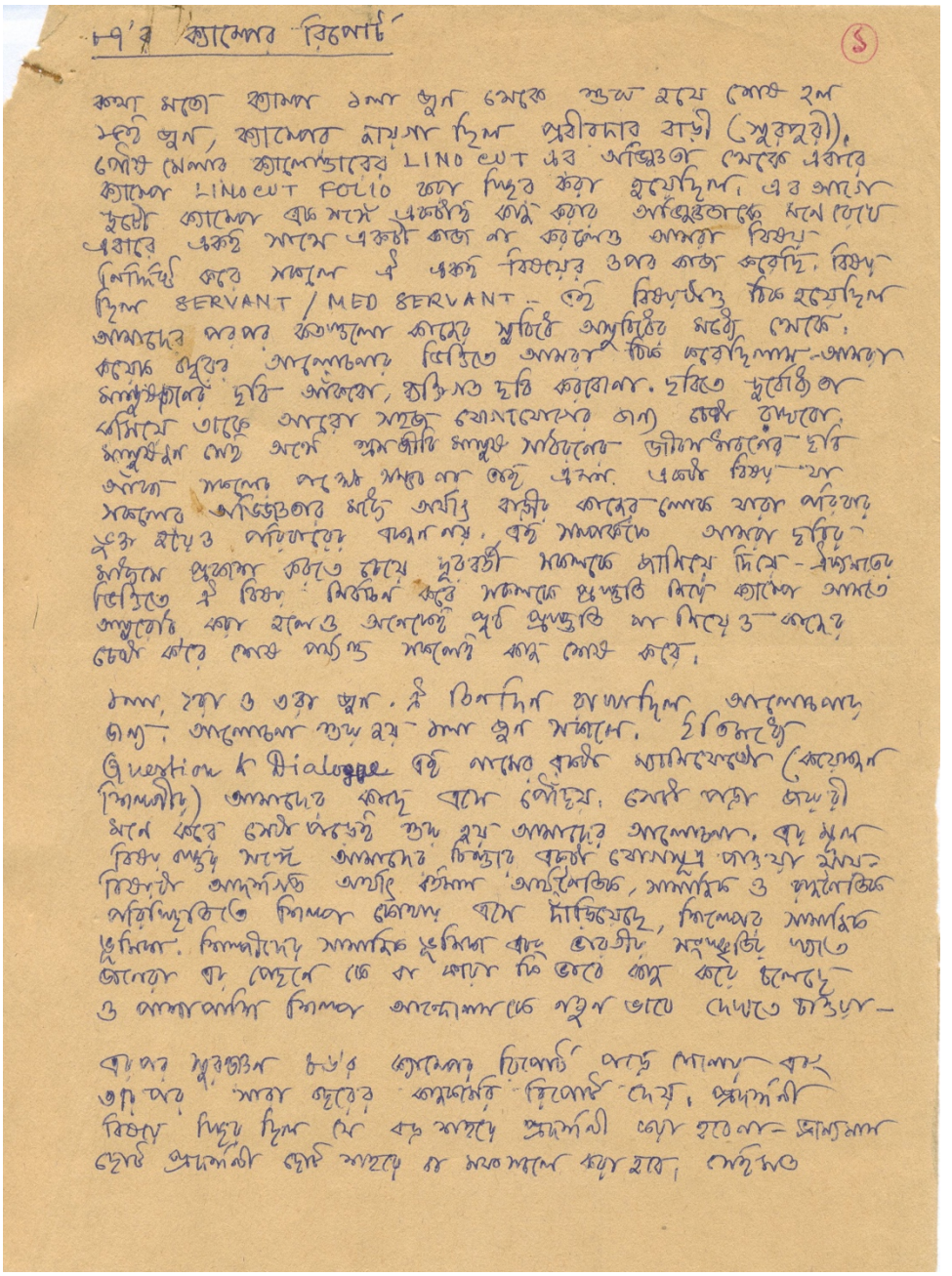

জনের সকলের সম্পূর্ণ সহযোগিতা ও সক্রিয়তা, তাই প্রতিবছর (৩)
মেলাকে সার্থক করে।

ছোট প্রদর্শনী সম্বন্ধে — অভিমত যে এ ধরনের প্রদর্শনী আমাদের কাছে সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ স্থান বড় গ্যালারীর নির্দিষ্ট দর্শক ছাড়িয়ে আমরা ছোট — শহরে বা মফস্বলে, গ্রামে, মধ্যবিত্ত নিম্নবিত্ত ছাত্র, চাকুরীজীবি এদের মধ্যে যেতে চাই — কেননা তাই নতুন দর্শক সৃষ্টি, দর্শকের সঙ্গে আমাদের ও আমাদের সঙ্গে দর্শকদের — যোগাযোগ সেতু তৈরী, বন্দীত্ব এ অবস্থার মুক্তি ঘটানো; নতুন শিল্পীদের নিঃসঙ্গতা, শিল্পের সামাজিক মূল্য — অবশ্যই তাই সামগ্রিক ভাবে এর স্থান প্রতিষ্ঠার জন্য উচিত সহজ বোধ্য ও উদ্দেশ্যপূর্ণ ভাবে বাংলাদেশের আমাদের অতীত থেকে একটা পরিচ্ছন্ন যে আজকের চিত্রে যা শ্রেণী বিভক্ত সমাজে প্রচলিত পাশ্চাত্য-মুখাপেক্ষী সংস্কৃতির চাপে মানুষের মুখ ও মন, সবকিছুর যে অবহেলার অনুসন্ধান যেখানে প্রদর্শনীর উপর এ প্রদর্শনীর সঙ্গে শিল্পের প্রচার যে যে পরিবর্তন আনে বিজ্ঞান সম্মত ভাবে প্রকাশিত, যন্ত্রোৎপাদিত চিত্রাদির মাধ্যমে বা ঐতিহাসিক প্রেক্ষাপটকে তুলে ধরে প্রয়োজনে সাময়িক-বক্তৃতার মাধ্যমে তার পরিস্ফুট করা প্রয়োজনীয়।

কোনো রাজনৈতিক সংগঠনের সঙ্গে, যুক্ত হয়ে না আমরা সামগ্রিক ভাবে মানুষ যে কোনো রাজনৈতিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির জীবিত তাই সেই থেকে আমরা স্বাধীন ভাবে আমাদের মাধ্যমে সমস্ত মানুষের কাছে আমাদের যোগাযোগের আহ্বান রাখছি।

একবার চিন্তা হয় সারা বছরের কর্মসূচী —

১। বছরে ছোট প্রদর্শনী — ২টো
২। বড় প্রদর্শনী — ১টা
৩। পৌষ মেলার দোকান — ১টি
৪। গ্রীষ্মের ক্যাম্প — ১টি

মেলার দোকানের জন্য ক্যালেন্ডার ও অন্যান্য কাজের — আয়োজনের জন্য (১লা অক্টোবর — ২৫শে অক্টোবর) আর গ্রীষ্মের ক্যাম্প ১লা জুন থেকে ৩০শে জুন এই নির্দিষ্ট দিনগুলো ঠিক করা হয়। মেলার দোকানের জন্য Printing বা সংগৃহীত চিত্রপত্র ও Block ইত্যাদি ১লা অক্টোবরের মধ্যে শান্তিনিকেতনে পৌঁছানো চাই। সাইজ (7"x7"), এছাড়া, গ্রিটিংস কার্ড ও অন্যান্য বিক্রয়যোগ্য জিনিসপত্র ১লা ডিসেম্বরের মধ্যে পৌঁছে দিতে হবে।

(৪)

শ্রীষ্মের ক্যাম্পের প্রয়োজনীয়তা আছে - কিনা এ প্রশ্ন উঠলে সকলে মনে করে এক সঙ্গে কাজ করাটা জরুরী, এর থেকে আমরা সকলেই শিক্ষা পাই এবং নিজেদের সম্পর্কগুলো পরিষ্কার করতে পারি. তবে ক্যাম্পের ধরন আমরা প্রয়োজনানুযায়ী পরিবর্তন করবো. এবারের ক্যাম্পের অভিজ্ঞতা - যা আমাদের টেকনিক্যাল অগ্রগতি ঘনেছে তবে মূলত আমাদের ছবির গুণগত মান পরিবর্তন তেমন হয়নি. তাই সকলের মতের - ওপর এটা ঠিক হয় যে আমরা একটা নির্দিষ্ট বিষয় নিয়ে সকলে বেশ কিছু ছুটি - বা অন্য ভাবে অনেকগুলো কাজের পরীক্ষা নিরীক্ষা থেকে আমাদের ছবি তৈরীর বেশ করে সমালোচনার মাধ্যমে প্রত্যেকের কাজের সমালোচনা থেকে প্রত্যেকের দোষ ত্রুটির প্রক্রিয়ার যথাযথ বিশ্লেষণ করে আদর্শের বহিঃপ্রকাশ হিসেবে আমাদের কাজকে প্রতিষ্ঠা করার বেশ রাখবো.

কিন্তু তাও প্রশ্ন থেকে যায় Reality ও Aesthetic এ দুটোকে মেলানো যায় কোন পথে? সময় সব সময়ই ছবিতে থাকছে কিন্তু দর্শকের কাছে পৌঁছতে শিল্পের নির্দিষ্ট শ্রেণীর শিক্ষিত দর্শক ছাড়িয়ে সাধারণের কাছে মূল্যায়িত হতে হলে Postar বা অন্যান্য সব কিছু থেকে ছবির আলাদা কোন মূল্যের প্রয়োজন আদৌ আছে কিনা! কোন সীমারেখা না থাকলে নতুন ভাবে শুরু হোক নতুন ভাবনা - তাহলেও ইতিহাস কি বলে? এই বিপ্লবী প্রচেষ্টার পথে একক বা বেশি শিল্পের কি এ পর্যন্ত কোন অস্তিত্ব নেই? এ কারণে ঐতিহাসিক ভাবে শিল্পের ও শিল্পীদের কাজকর্মের মূল্যায়ন আমাদের করতে হবে বস্তুবাদী - দর্শনের ভিত্তিতে - আমাদের আদর্শগত দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিকে স্পষ্ট করে তুলতে হবে শ্রেণী সংগ্রামের মধ্যে টিকে থাকা শিল্পের পদ্যরূপে গণ্য হওয়ার ইতিহাস আর অন্য দিকে বিপ্লবী ভূমিকায় এই পথের ঐতিহ্যকে সমাজের কাছে প্রয়োজনীয় হয়ে উঠে যা তাই কি শিল্প? সময়ের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে হাত্যাচারিত নীপিড়িত - জনগণের হাতিয়ার হয়ে উঠাই কি শিল্পের কাজ হবে নাকি সময়ের পরেও চিরন্তন মানবিক মূল্য বোধ থাকবে এর ভেতর? এই অমীমাংসা থেকে গেলেও শিল্পের স্বরূপ ও তার সঙ্গে আমাদের চেতনার যুক্ত প্রক্রিয়া ও সরাসরি সমাজ বদলানোর কাজে সক্রিয় ভূমিকার কথা স্বীকার করে আমাদের ভাবনা এগিয়ে চলুক. শিল্পের জন্য শিল্প নয় - শিল্প মানুষের জন্য - সমাজ বদলানোর জন্য - শিল্পের জীবন্ত ভূমিকা প্রাণশক্তির জন্য, সত্যকে প্রকাশ করার জন্য. অন্য মানুষকে সচেতন করার জন্য. তাই ভাষা হোক সবাই, শিল্পী হোক মুক্ত;

GROUP MONEY ACCOUNT 1986 – 87

BALANCE FROM 1985-86 — 132 = 50

COLLECTION

GENERAL	1050 = 00
W.CUT. FOLIO	400 = 00
MELA SALE	4095 = 85
TOTAL COLLECTION	5678 = 35

EXPENDITURE

GENERAL	100 = 00
EXHIBITION	243 = 00
BOLPUR GIRLS' SCHOOL	39 = 00
BURDWAN	70 = 00
SATINIKETAN	75 = 00
W.CUT. FOLIO	376 = 00
DOCUMENTATION	414 = 00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1317 = 10

TOTAL COLLECTION — 5678 = 35
TOTAL EXPENDITURE — 1317 = 10

BALENCE - 4361 = 25

এই হিসাব - 1987 ক্যাম্পের আগে পর্যন্ত।

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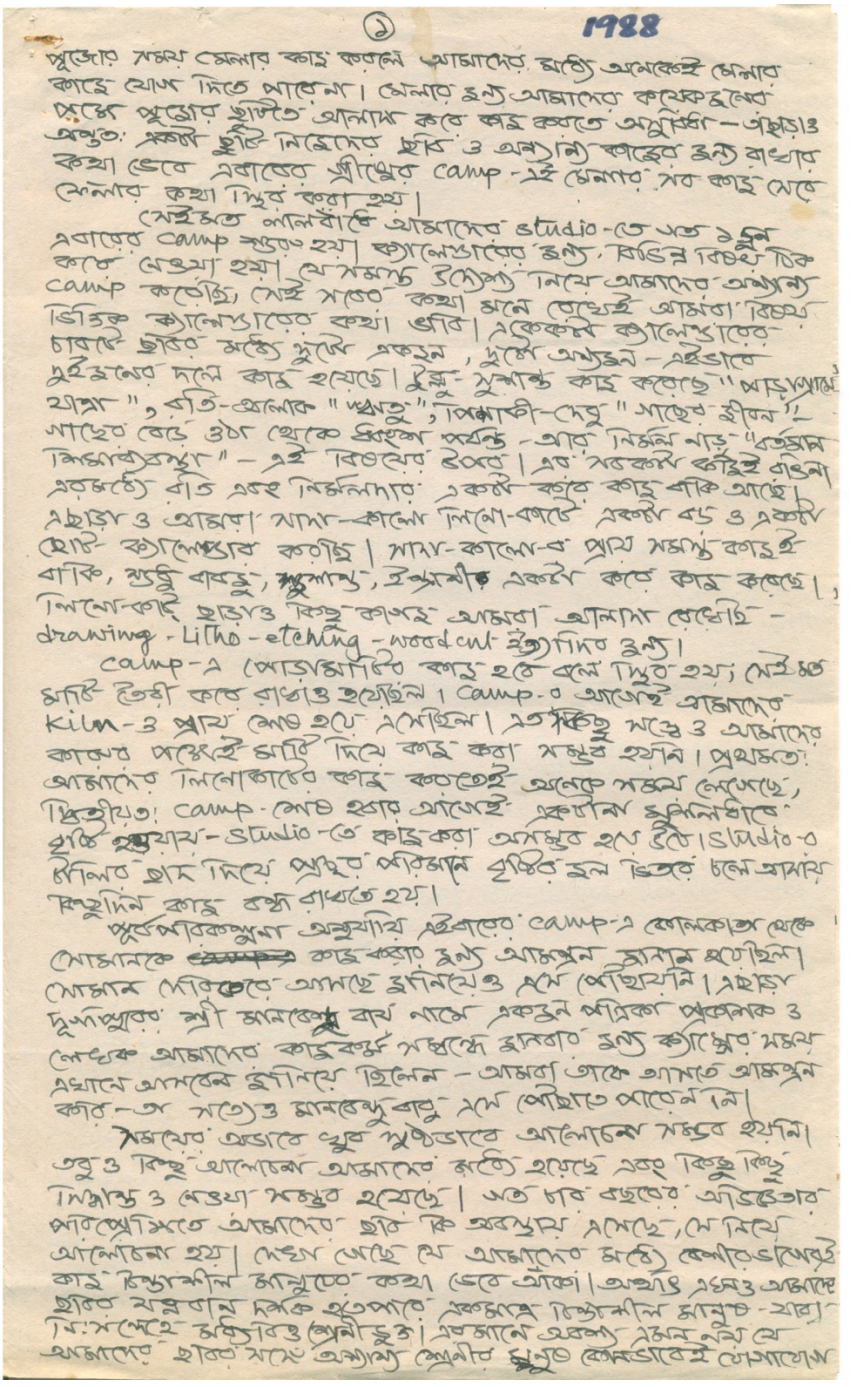

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করতে পারে না। এইদিনের সাধারণ-শিক্ষিত মানুষের কথা ভেবেই আমরা মেলার দোকানের পরিকল্পনা নিয়েছিলাম, এবং আমাদের এতদিনের বিভিন্ন কাজ কর্মের মধ্যে হয়ত এই মেলার দোকান এবং তৎসংক্রান্ত কাজই সবথেকে বেশী সার্থক। এছাড়া আমাদের দুটো কোলাজ-ও সাধারণ ভাবে এই ধরনের মানুষদের কাছেই পৌঁছেছে। নিম্নবিত্ত অথবা শ্রমিক শ্রেণীর মানুষজন নিয়ে আমাদের মধ্যে অনেকেই কাজ করছে বা করে - কিন্তু সে ছবি কেনার সময় ও মূলত দর্শক হিসাবে মধ্যবিত্ত অথবা নিম্ন-মধ্যবিত্ত শ্রেণীর কথা ভাবা হয়। আলোচনায় সবারই মনে হয়েছে যে সেই সমস্ত নিম্নবিত্ত শ্রেণীর মানুষদের কাছে আমাদের ছবি অর্থপূর্ণ করতে হলে - তাদের আরো কাছাকাছি যাওয়া প্রয়োজন, আমাদের জীবনচর্যাও নতুনভাবে গড়ে তোলার প্রয়োজন। আমরা বেশীরভাগই যেভাবে জীবনযাপন করি তাতে এই মুহূর্তে সেইরূপ জীবনচর্চা বদলে ফেলাও সম্ভব নয়। এই আলোচনার ভিত্তিতেই স্থির হয় - যে আমরা প্রদর্শনীর কথা ভাবলে, যেখানে শিক্ষিত মধ্যবিত্ত বা নিম্ন-মধ্যবিত্ত শ্রেণীকে দর্শক হিসাবে পাব সেখানেই হওয়া বাঞ্ছনীয়।

অন্যদিকে এটাও লক্ষ্য করা গেছে যে আমাদের সম্মিলিত কাজকর্ম যথেষ্ট সংকীর্ণ হয়ে শেষপর্যন্ত বছরে একটা camp-এ দাঁড়িয়েছে। যে দর্শকদের কথা আগে উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে তাদের মধ্যে আমাদের ছবি সহজলভ্য করে তোলার জন্য কিছু নতুন ব্যবস্থার কথা ভাবা হয়েছে। শুধু ছবির প্রদর্শনী ছাড়াও অন্যভাবে দর্শকের কাছে আমাদের ছবি ও ছবি সংক্রান্ত চিন্তাভাবনা পৌঁছে দেওয়া যায় কিনা সেই নিয়ে আলোচনা হয়। মেলার দোকানে এইভাবে ছবির মধ্যে দিয়ে অনেক সংখ্যক মানুষের সাথে যোগাযোগের একটা প্রয়াস। এবারে ক্যালেন্ডার তৈরী হয়েছে বিষয়-ভিত্তিক, তেমনি কার্ডও বিষয়ভিত্তিক হবে বলে স্থির হয়। -(একজন একটা বিষয় নিয়েও অনেকগুলো কাজ করতে পারে, সবাই একই বিষয়ে কাজ করবে এমনও হতে পারে)। এবার মেলার দোকান বেশী জায়গা নিয়ে নতুনভাবে সাজানো হবে। দোকানেই ছ'টি থেকে আটটি ছবি নিয়ে প্রদর্শনী হবে। আমরা যেহেতু বেশীরভাগই print maker তাই সকলেই এই প্রদর্শনীর জন্য বিষয়ভিত্তিক painting করবে। এইসবের মধ্যে দিয়ে দর্শকদের কাছে আমাদের মানসিকতার পরিচয় ঘটবে বলে আমরা আশা করি।

এই বছর মেলা শুরু হবে 22শে ডিসে. থেকে, কাজেই সবাইকে জানানো হচ্ছে যে তারা যেন 20শে ডিসে:-র মধ্যে তাদের painting শান্তিনিকেতনে পৌঁছে দেয়। ছবির বিষয় - SOCIAL SATIRE.
ছবির সাইজ 22"X30" (maximum)

এই একই সূত্রে ড্রইং এবং কিছু লেখা নিয়ে একটা booklet xerox করে সস্তায় বিক্রি করার সম্ভাবনার কথা ভাবা হয়। এও একটি মূল বিষয়বস্তু ছন্দ থাকবে, যার থেকে আমাদের চিন্তাভাবনা বিশ্বাস আর মানসিকতার পরিচয় পাওয়া যাবে। এই ব্যাপারে বিস্তারিত পরে সকলকে জানানো হবে। কারণ এতে কত খরচা হবে, কত পাতা হবে, কত কপি ছাপা হবে, ড্রইং half-tone-এ ~~[illegible]~~ করা যাবে কিনা আর বিষয় ইত্যাদি ব্যাপারে কিছুই এখনও স্থির হয়নি।

এতোদিন আমরা ভেবে এসেছি যে ছবির ব্যাপারে কোন সঠিক অবস্থায় না পৌঁছলে অবধি আমরা প্রদর্শনীর কথা ভাবব না।

কিন্তু, এখন সকলেরই মনে হচ্ছে যে আমাদের বিভিন্ন স্তরের দর্শকের সাথে সরাসরি যোগাযোগের প্রয়োজন। ছবিকে সঠিক ভাবে মিলিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার জন্য সমালোচনার মুখোমুখি হবার প্রয়োজনীয়তাও সকলেই অনুভব করে। প্রদর্শনীর ব্যাপারে ঠিক হয় যে আমাদের একসাথে আঁকা দুটো ছবি, দুটো কোলাজ-ও ছবি, ক্যালেন্ডারের কিছু বাছাই করা ছবি আর সবারই অন্যান্য কিছু ছবি নিয়ে আগামী বছর কলকাতায় বইমেলায়। Akademy-তে প্রদর্শনী হবে। এব্যাপারে যোগাযোগ করার দায়িত্ব পিনাকীর। Catalogue-এ আমাদের একসাথে মিলিত হবার কারণ, আমাদের অভিজ্ঞতা, আমরা ঠিক কি করার চেষ্টা করছি, কিকি করেছি এর একটা সং বর্ণনা থাকবে।

মেলার দোকান এবং কোলকাতার প্রদর্শনী ছাড়াও শান্তিনিকেতনে সুবর্ণরেখা বই এর দোকানের দেয়ালে দলের তরফ থেকে একটা পাকাপাকি ছবি display board লাগাবার প্রস্তাব হয় যেখানে আমাদের ছবি পাল্টিয়ে পাল্টিয়ে display করা হবে। প্রসঙ্গত জানান হচ্ছে যে আমাদের রঙিন লিনোকাট কোলাজও লেখা সহ তৈরী হয়ে গেছে এবং বিক্রিও শুরু হয়েছে।

প্রতীমা এবারে শান্তিনিকেতনে উপস্থিত থাকা সত্বেও আমাদের সঙ্গে কাজ করেনি। কারণ প্রতীমার কিছু ব্যক্তিগত সমস্যার আশুকালীন সমাধান না হওয়া অবধি প্রতীমা নিজে মনে করে যে আমাদের থেকে কিছুটা দূরত্বে থাকা তার নিজের জন্যই প্রয়োজন। এই প্রসঙ্গে বিস্তারিত আলোচনায় আমরা সকলে প্রতীমাকে অনুরোধ করেছিলাম ক্যাম্পে কাজ করতে তা সত্ত্বেও প্রতীমা তার সিদ্ধান্তেই স্থির থাকে।

আমাদের এই লেখা সম্বন্ধে ভালভাবে চিন্তা করে সকলকেই তাদের পরামর্শ ও মতামত নিশ্চয় করে জানাতে অনুরোধ করছি।

Activity and Camp Report 1982-1985

Here is an attempt to keep a record of a successful artists' camp organised by our collective effort at Santiniketan and chronologically narrate the events that led to this camp. It is impossible to write about this camp without integrating the varied activities that preceded the camp, particularly if one considers this as a historical document.

Though an attempt is made to give it a shape and a structure, it would surely need a lot of correction and addition. A copy of it is being sent to everybody so that each one can reflect on the text, send back their suggestions individually which can subsequently be incorporated into the text to give it a sense of completeness. It is necessary to document a detailed description of the camp.

The main purpose of the camp was not only to reduce the distance between friends scattered around the country but more importantly to materialize the spirit of doing something collectively. Although this urge to do something together touched our lives in varied ways and at different points in time, we feel it is reasonable to begin this report with the series of events from the beginning of 1984.

Many of us felt the necessity to work together but did not explicitly express it till the middle of 1982. But from the beginning of 1984, those who lived in Delhi met and discussed about the idea on a regular basis and even thought about exploring the possibility of forming an artists' group.

When they were seriously engaged in discussions around the idea at Delhi, an offer came from Somnath-da [Somnath Hore] to hold a graphics camp with his students at his residence in Santiniketan during the summer vacation of 1984. Naturally they did not want to miss this opportunity to meet other friends at Santiniketan - exchange views and show their works. Those living in Delhi were eager to organise the camp but due to their inexperience, some complications popped up and the project had to be dropped. The camp did not take place but in May 1984 everybody came together at Santiniketan for about four-five days and exchanged their views. Many of them showed their works and had discussion sessions on the works. Amit-da read out an essay on art and Sugata briefly discussed the political situation of the twentieth century. Can art be political and social ? Why should we make art ? for whom, about what, and how ? – these were the questions discussed. We did not reach at a unanimous conclusion but everybody agreed on one point : that art should be easily understandable and realistic.

Some questions emerged during the discussion on the works ; for instance, Banka [Aloke Adhikari] stated that his paintings depict the dark side of the life of higher middle class people – but what is wrong about it, he asked. Tublu [Suranjan] represented two different classes of people, yet it was observed that, the distinct class characters of each were missing in his depiction of figures –

discussion followed about finding out ways to resolve it ... and so on. It was clear from Sushanta's recent works that he has moved away from his earlier surrealistic works ; his works now are more comprehensible and realistic. Works of Alok Som and Rati were also shown.

Other questions around art-making were raised and discussed as well. For instance, can we all make pictures or posters on a single subject ; after considering the matter it was decided that everybody would try to work on the subject of 'Unemployment'. These works with other works would then be exhibited in Bombay.

In addition to discussion around the making of art, all felt the need to study and take up research work. Each one will do research on different fields of studies, and talk about them in the next gathering. Many felt the necessity to study Marxist philosophy, too.

In spite of the conversation sessions described above, the discussions were not well coordinated, there were lack of trust, too. The suddenness with which this coming together took place confused many about what was happening and what was going to happen. Moreover, the exchange of views and discussion sessions were not systematic and integrated as everybody lived at different places at Santiniketan. Even after all these confusions, everybody felt that they were interested in giving a sincere effort to do 'something' – though the meaning of this 'something' was not fully clear to anybody.

Those who participated in this gathering were, Tapan Mitra, Prabir Biswas, Amit Mukherjee, Nirmalendu Das, Pinaki Barua, Sitangshu Mukhopadhyay, Pulak Dutta, Ramprasad Bhattacharya, Sugata Hazra, Sujit Ghosh, Nitai Majumdar, Alok Som, Alok Adhikari, Siddhartha Ghosh, Sushanta Guha, Rati Basu, Suranjan Basu, Sumantra Sengupta.

MAY 1984 – DECEMBER 1984

The responsibility to organise the Bombay exhibition was entrusted first with Nitai, then to those living in Delhi. Everybody was asked to send photographs of their works and biodatas ; some of them were received and sent to Jehangir Art Gallery at Bombay. There was no positive response from the gallery. The plan had to be abandoned since no booking was possible.

December ... to ... an informal exhibition of recent works of some of us was organised at Santiniketan for three days. A discussion session was organised in the exhibition hall itself so that the students and teachers could take part in it. Our basic aim was to present our idea and thought along with the works. The students responded by stating that there is a lack of coherence between our ideas and our works ; we planned another session with the students. Nirmal-da, Prabir-da, Pinaki-da, Siddhartha, Nitai, Sumantra, Pulak, Sushanta, Rati, Suranjan participated in this exhibition.

25 MAY – 6 JUNE 1985

It was already decided that if we meet again, it will be organised as an artists' camp. That the camp should be held at a specific place so that everybody can stay at one place – eat and work and sleep and participate in discussions together. After considering every one's convenience it was decided that a woodcut camp will take place from 25 May to 5 June at Santiniketan – Suranjan's house was properly prepared to hold the camp. The gathering this time was more fruitful because of these planned arrangements. Those who participated in this camp were, Prabir-da, Amit-da, Nirmal-da, Pinaki-da, Nitai, Rajat [Ramprasad], Pulak, Sushanta, Rati and Tublu [Suranjan]. The new friends who participated this time were, Tarit [Bhattacharya]-da, Pranjala [Gill] and Narayan [Sutradhar]. Those who participated last time but could not make it this time were, Sumantra, Alok Som, Aloke Adhikari, Siddhartha, Sugata and Sujit.

Work and discussion continued simultaneously as decided in the beginning of the camp. Everybody will work on their woodcuts individually following their own practices - we will not choose a common subject and work on it.

The main activities of the camp,

1. To complete one woodcut each. 2. To see and reflect on each one's recent works. 3. To watch paintings and graphics from socialist countries and Mexican murals through slide projection. 4. Collectively produce a large scroll drawing. 5. General discussion, discussion on future camp and group activity.

1. Everybody produced woodcuts from 12" x 15" *gamhar* wood block. All worked with their own style and subject in black and white. They felt a particular discomfort though, perhaps because of their practice of working in an isolated private space or for working individually in a group atmosphere. They, therefore, had problem concentrating on their woodcuts.

2. New works of Sushanta, Nirmal-da, Pinaki-da, Rati, Nitai and Tublu [Suranjan] were shown. Paintings of Alok Som were shown through slide projection. The works of the two new participants this year – Tarit [Bhattacharya]-da and Pranjala [Gill] - were also viewed. Everyone was impressed by Tarit [Bhattacharya]-da's regular involvement with his practice of art in spite of being in an isolated and unfavourable situation.

3. A slide projector was brought from Kala Bhavana ; the camp started with watching paintings and graphics from the East European countries as well as Mexican murals through slide projection. Everybody enjoyed watching Bulgarian woodcuts, Romanian paintings and graphics, Polish paintings, Hungarian graphics and paintings and Russian paintings and graphics. Everybody felt the sincerity with which the works were made. They were bright in colour and simple in nature – an expression of love and compassion for life ; suffering and protest of

the exploited classes being one of their central themes. The power of language and its successful use in Mexican murals in the context of their social and political happenings, attracted the minds of all the participants. The issue of the necessity and possible ways to express political and social problems in works of art was discussed in this connection.

4. Work went on with woodcut for the first few days of the camp. Gradually, through a series of discussions of different kinds, it was decided that we start some experimentations with our practice of image-making process - to free ourselves from personal habits of image-construction, which almost reached a form of mannerism over a period of time. To be able to do that, the works of art must be objective in outlook ; the requirement is to try different processes of image-making through experimentations. A specific action plan was adopted which would help us free ourselves from the personal mannerisms and move towards a more common language. One of the experiments was to create a single piece of work on a specific subject matter together. Accordingly, those who could stay on during the end of the camp, i.e., 2 June to 6 June, decided to work on a large sheet of paper on a subject chosen from our real, common experience. 'Our Artists' Camp' was chosen as our subject. The main participants who worked on the drawing were Pinaki-da, Sushanta, Nirmal-da, Nitai, Rati and Tublu [Suranjan].[36] Amit-da and Rajat [Ramprasad] helped by taking part in discussions on the process of making the drawing 'objective'.

The subject of the picture is divided into several parts. The first part depicts our simple and undisturbed Kala Bhavana life till around 1980 – the compositional structure, therefore, is kept simple. Then came the loneliness of our urban life and after leaving Santiniketan, constantly becoming more and more self-centered in various cities – yet observing human beings from a closer distance. Here the composition is like a storm of a turbulent sea. The attempt to reconnect with other friends scattered around the country and meet at the gathering of 1984 at Santiniketan takes place in the next part. The search for something new through individual works and studies from 1984 till the next camp in 1985 and the description of the 1985 camp is narrated in the last part. The drawing moved from one part to another from left to right like a scroll painting. Keeping the historical importance in mind, the work also attempted to document the events that led to our gatherings. Although an attempt was made to make the drawing as an authentic documentation with details of the events as far as possible, the finished drawing could not fully fulfill the goal.

5. General discussion – we have, through the series of conversations, successfully achieved a state to have a clearer and closer relationship among us, to realize more

[36] Looking at the scroll, one can easily identify the presence of Sumantra. His name, perhaps, was omitted by mistake.

clearly and confidently the necessity to move together and plan some specific experimentations from this perspective.
The question of having a manifesto of our group was discussed but resolved that we do not need a manifesto at the moment.
To free ourselves from the mannerist style developed through our old education system, we must get into some specific plan of action and experiment, as discussed earlier. Accordingly, some necessary practices were decided upon,
a) Everybody should emphasize on drawing directly from Nature and life. For this, we will need to go out, select a spot, observe an event or time and do our sketching. Leaving the house or studio space, we must relate ourselves to the life of the outside world.
b) Everybody would continue to study ; understand the history of art movements in India and outside, study and analyze them as that would help us to decide on the kind of art we should be making at the present historical moment. This study should also be collective in nature. We would, individually or as a group, take up a subject of study, analyze and document them for the benefit of the whole group. Those who live in Delhi will work on the art of socialist countries as well as western countries and also continue to document them if necessary. Study and documentation of Calcutta Group or the collection at the Rabindra Bharati University will be done by Pinaki-da at Kolkata. Naru [Pulak] and Tarit-da to work on the Madras Museum and also study and document the works of contemporaries of Bengal School movement found in and around Madras. Nitai will look for important materials in Trivandrum and document them. He will also collect information about old prints. Above all this, whoever finds important materials anywhere will collect and study them. Photographic slides, photographs or any other form of documents from the studies done will be archived at a particular place for everybody's use. The expenses will be borne by the persons documenting them but if anyone wants to step out of the initiative at any point in time, he/she will not have any claim on the materials collected in the archive.

There will be a work collectively done by us every year ; the subject and a rough method of doing it will be decided before the camp starts. The responsibility to work out and get the layout ready will be given to one or two persons – the work will begin after going through a discussion on the layout. Everybody shall put an effort to find the right way to make this collectively produced work more successful.

Two works from all the participants are collected and kept with Nirmal-da – he will try to hold an exhibition at N.E.H.U. when he goes to Shillong.

Summer Camp Report 1986

We started our discussion session this year at Kanchan-da's [Chakraberti] house on 25 May, as decided earlier. Those attended this year's camp were : Amit, Prabir, Nirmal, Tarit, Pinaki, Alok Som, Debu [Debabrata Dutta], Ravi [Ravi Kant Dwivedi] Naru [Pulak], Tublu [Suranjan], Sushanta, Rati and Sujata. Some of them had to leave earlier before the camp ended ; a few of them joined after the camp started. In spite of informing everybody about the dates well in advance, Babju [Sumantra], Nitai, Rajat [Ramprasad] and Banka [Aloke Adhikari] could not come due to unavoidable circumstances. We moved to Tublu's house on the 27th. as there were some problems at Kanchan-da's place and Tublu's [Suranjan] house was free from any such problems.

Nobody worked individually this year as everybody thought that it was necessary to have elaborate discussions on different issues. Everybody worked on a large scroll, like last year. Considering the problems of creating a single work together, a subject and strategy of its execution was discussed and the work, from beginning till the end, was based on the discussion.

Subjects with personal emotional impact such as war, peace, famine and so on were discarded to avoid conflicting personal reactions affecting the work. Particular activities at a workplace were thus selected as our subject at this initial phase of working together. All of us present visited a saw mill on the other side of the railway track at Purbopolli - sketching, taking visual notes and studying their activities in details for a few days. The idea was to represent the particular atmosphere of the saw mill in our large scroll. Discussion to collectively decide on the visual structure of the drawing took place before the work began. Those who worked last year thought, this year's work faced less problems compared to the last year. It is, therefore reasonable to think that we have progressed a little in executing such kind of works, i.e., a single work made collectively.

Apart from this, the following issues were discussed and resolutions adopted,

1. Research and Documentation : The need to study and understand history was felt to find our place in contemporary society. It is important to study history, particularly the art history of nineteenth and twentieth century India, for the benefit of our own art practices which we think remains incomplete so far. We should continue to do the documentation work, both visual and written, to keep contact with the art works and art movements taking place elsewhere in the world.
2. Art-centred activities : Considering our own sphere of activities and that of the contemporary artists, all participants felt the need to move towards a parallel art movement.

a. To take art closer to the general people : exhibiting at suburban areas and villages instead of showing in big cities ; the subject of making art sensitive to immediate

surrounding and simple and free of incomprehensibility as far as possible, was discussed in this connection. This, of course, doesn't mean that we will never exhibit at big cities or our art will not have intellectual elements and express complex mental experiences or deal with critical problems.

b. Parallel art movement/practice : We must explore the surroundings of wherever we are, go to specific places, study their specific problems, work on them and exhibit the art works in that locality. Through interactions and discussions with the spectators at these locations, it is possible to take art outside big city galleries and move towards an alternative practice of art. In addition, with the financial help on daily wage basis, from the government agencies, we think, there is a possibility to make murals at busy and crowded areas like railway stations, post offices, market places, village schools and so on.

3. The possibility of forming an artists' group with the present members was considered but decided that we would consider it only after working for a year with our own way through the specific programmes. It was decided, in this connection, to make a woodcut folio with individual woodcuts made by us on the subject, 'The Saw Mill'. The folios will be sold and the profit made from the sale will be used for our documentation works and exhibitions and so on.

4. It is necessary to live closer to each other in order to work towards a collective movement of art. Prabir, Nirmal, Naru [Pulak], Rati and Tublu [Suranjan] are in Santiniketan at the moment and Pinaki, Alok Som, Ravi and Debu [Debabrata] in Kolkata. The responsibility, therefore, was given to them to plan this year's programme, organise exhibitions and related activities ; but most important of all, to create an ideal working atmosphere so that everybody can immerse themselves deeply and sincerely into their works and continue to critically think about art and engage in artistic experimentations.

5. Based on our ideas and way of practicing art, one thing is clear to everybody that our art practice cannot be isolated from the larger social movements, and that we must work within that context. The possibility of being directly in contact with political party was discussed but as we are neither conscious enough of the political activities nor connected with it at the moment, the idea was dropped for the moment. But we think we must have a conscious understanding of these social and political movements, thus must begin studying about these movements and be in contact with those who are deeply involved in these activities.

It is past three months since the camp was over, yet almost nothing is done according to the plans. Money for the woodcut folio, expenditure for exhibition has not been received from everybody yet. We have not sent the proof prints to Amit-da or final prints to Tublu [Suranjan] in time. Not a single exhibition is organised yet, although all the works are framed and ready to be exhibited. We consider this an utter failure on our part ; we must be far more serious and respectful about it.

Those who were present at the camp this year, faced some common problems – since we meet only once a year, we should all try to overcome our personal problems and come closer during the camps. Secondly, as we meet for a limited amount of time, we must all attend the camps from the first day, otherwise our primary objective would certainly be defeated. We have to wait for a long time for somebody coming tomorrow, some other the day after. We have to start everything from the beginning for those who join later. We must overcome this problem and shall try to establish our artists' camps above all other personal problems.

Requesting all to send notes in case somebody wants additions or corrections to this camp report. It is indeed difficult to prepare a note like this, so, it is natural that something would be missed out or remain incomplete. Requesting everybody to actively help in preparing such camp reports.

Contact address,
Suranjan Basu
C/O Bidyutranjan Basu
Dokkhinpolli
Santiniketan
731235

Summer Camp Report 1987

The camp started on 1 June and ended on 15 June at Prabir-da's house, 'Suropuri', as decided earlier. From our experience of producing linocut calendars for the Poush Mela last year, we decided to make a linocut folio at this year's camp. Keeping our experience of working on a single picture together in last two years in mind, we decided to work individually on a common subject this year : *Servant Maid-Servant.* The subject was chosen according to the convenience of our way of working. Based on our discussion of past few years, we chose to reject the practice of personal picture making and express the life of people instead. Freeing art from being unintelligible, we made attempts to create a free and simple passage of communication through art. It is not possible for everybody to work on the way of life of the working class in general ; we, therefore, chose a subject closer to our life. Working at all our houses, the servants and maid-servants remain outside the family in spite of being a part of our life – we wanted to express this relationship. After communicating the idea to others living in different cities, the subject was collectively agreed upon. Everybody was requested to come prepared for the project, but not all have come prepared, though everybody finally completed their works successfully.

1st., 2nd. and 3rd. June were kept aside for discussions. In the meantime, a manifesto of a group of artists, called *Questions and Dialogue* reached us.[37] Our discussion started with reading this as it was felt important to us. A connection between the basic concern and idea of the text and our own endeavour in the field of art practice, was found. It was regarding the ideological positions – the place of art in contemporary economic, social and political situation ; about the role of art in society, the responsibility of artists in society and to understand who and how are the well-known artists working in the field of culture ; also to have a fresh look at an art movement.

Suranjan read out the camp report of '86 and then placed the report of the activities done over the last year. We decided not to have exhibitions in big cities but will organise small and travelling exhibitions at small towns. Accordingly, our show at Bolpur girls' School on 4th. October, exhibition at Tejganj in Bardhoman on the occasion of 'November Revolution' on 21st. November and a big show at Nandan, Kala Bhavana from 6th. to 17th. December were organised - discussions were held on these activities. We took up new programmes from the ideas drawn from the direct experiences of these shows.

Then came the question of organising big shows at cities and everybody agreed that it is important to show in big cities. There is a necessity to introduce ourselves and to expand our ideas and thoughts. We can hold shows in Delhi, Bombay and Kolkata ; Sushanta will enquire about the galleries at Delhi. Everybody must submit 10 works by Feb'88. A selection from the collected works will be shown in the show. But we should not let it become a usual art exhibition, the show must manifest our aim and thought and make our ideological position clear. ... [38] It is not enough to make changes in the artworks only. One must radically transform one's own living to bring about change in art practice, free art from being a commodity and bring art back to its aesthetic value. But then arises the question of livelihood. Most of us are involved in teaching ; we must not compromise with the state's education policy to protect our livelihood but actually practice what we believe in. Practically, the only solution to get out of our isolation and loneliness, is to change our lives. Under the circumstances, we must not delay the process and submit our works by Feb'88, so that we can select the works which reflect our ideological position successfully and show them. Active cooperation from the friends whose works would not be selected are expected in this process.

Everybody was of the opinion that small shows are the most important ones to us as it goes beyond the limited viewers of the big cities and reach out to

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[37] Anita Dube, *Questions and Dialogue,* Baroda. March 1987. Indian Radical Painters' and Sculptors' Association. This booklet was sent by them to Suranjan and Rati in Santiniketan.

[38] Found this part impossible to make sense of or interpret.

people of small town or villages like middle class teachers, students or ordinary job holders and create a new category of viewers. The isolation of artists and the social death of art is inevitable unless we develop a dialogical relationship between the viewers and us and free art from this unproductive time. We are trying to make art sharp in content and easily comprehensible. But, through our own experience we have realized that in today's class divided society, with a constant pressure of state-encouraged culture, the general public is suffering from the loss of innocence and freedom of mind. Under the situation it is important to scientifically explain the need to change the nature of exhibitions and changes in art language through slide shows and photographs.

We will not be working with any political party. But, with the realization that every human being lives under a political condition, we welcome communications with all.

The following activities for the coming year was agreed upon,

1. Small Show – 2
2. Big show – 1
3. Poush Mela stall – 1
4. Summer camp – 1

The dates for the work such as calendar making for mela stall and the summer camp were fixed at 15 to 25 October and 01-15 June respectively. Materials and blocks for printing for the Poush Mela stall should reach Santiniketan by 01 October. Image size 9"x9". Terracotta pieces and other art objects for sale should reach by 01 December.

Everyone thinks that it is necessary to continue with our summer gatherings as we all learn from this experience of working together and also get our relationships clearer. But we will change the character of the camps according to the needs. This year's camp brought about technical progress but there is not much progress in the quality of our works. We, therefore, decided to work on a common subject, critically engage in discussions, analyse weaknesses of each one of our works and make an effort to establish our works as an honest representation of our ideal.

Yet, the question of how to integrate reality with aesthetics remains relevant. Does art have any value outside other visual expressions such as posters to the people we want to reach out to - viewers beyond specially trained art viewers ? Can we get our works understood and assessed by them ? Let us begin to think afresh if there is no division between art and other visual expressions ; but what does the history teach us about it ? Doesn't art, either individual or collective in nature, have any place in this revolutionary path ? We must for this very reason, historically evaluate activities of the artist community from the philosophically

materialistic viewpoint. We must establish our ideological position. Survival of commodified art through the class struggle in history on the one hand and the revolutionary role of these movements on the other – can what becomes necessary to the society under such condition be called art ? Should art be an instrument of the oppressed people or represent the timeless human values ? In spite of all these confusions, we must go ahead holding the nature of art and our own conscious actions together. Let our concern move forward with active participation in the process of social change. Art for not art's sake, art for humanity's sake. Art for social change, for art's lively role, for expressing the truth, for making others conscious – let the language of art be transparent and artists be free.

Everybody completed 25 prints each on an average in this year's 15 day camp ; it was possible due to the active cooperation in helping each other. A portfolio will be published with these colour linocuts. Due to some technical difficulty faced while printing, we are not sure of the number of folios we will be able to publish – we hope the editions to be between 15 and 20. We will express the success and failures of our works in writing and publish it with the folio. With everybody's consent, the responsibility of writing the note is given to Amit Mukherjee – ten prints have already been sent by post to him. Expecting to receive the write-up from Amit by 15 August. Making of the cover and getting the folio ready is to be done by those who are living in Santiniketan, yet the responsibility is specially given to Pinaki. The price of the folio is fixed at Rupees 200 each.

Requesting everyone once again to put an effort to sell the rest of woodcut folios – Saw Mill. Please send Rupees 100 to Suranjan as early as possible to meet the expenses of sending letters, making photocopies and other works along with your new works for the travelling exhibitions.

The annual festival of Rhyme theatre group was held on 20 and 21 June '87 at Pallabpukur. Along with theatre shows and musical programmes, an exhibition of art and posters was also organised where we showed a selection of 22 works from our travelling exhibition. Along with this, photocopies of some works of Kathe Kollwitz, reproductions of Somnath Hore's sculptures and 10 linocuts made during '87 Uttorpara artists' camp were displayed. Although the festival was disrupted due to rain, the exhibition managed to continue for those two days. The excess of works in black and white was felt disturbing by the viewers ; the art works appeared incomprehensible to the people of middle-class locality of a suburban town, but they did view the works with interest and seriousness. A critic from *Pratikshan* magazine showed interest in us and our works. The works of Kathe Kollwitz in this exhibition were found most attractive.

Summer Camp Report 1988

Many of us can't work for the mela if we work during the Puja holidays. Some of us find it inconvenient to work during Puja ; also, feeling the need to keep at least one holidays for our own art making and other works, we decided to complete all our mela works during our summer camp this year.

The camp started on 01 June this time at our studio in Lalbnadh. Different subjects or themes were chosen. Following the objective of our earlier camps, we thought of producing theme-based calendars. The plan was to have sets of two artists – making two images each – to produce a calendar. Tublu [Suranjan]-Sushanta worked on 'Village *Jatra*s', Rati-Alok [Som] on 'Seasons', Pinaki-Debu [Debabrata] 'Life of Trees', starting from their growing up to destruction and Nirmal-Naru [Pulak] made their calendar on 'Education System Today'. These are all color linocuts – all except one each of Nirmal-da and Rati are complete. Apart from that, we are making black and white calendars, one large and one small. Most of the black and white works are not done yet, only one work each of Babju [Sumantra], Sushanta and Indrani are finished. We also kept some papers aside for drawing-litho-etching-woodcut and others.

There was a plan to do terracotta works in the camp – accordingly, the clay was prepared and ready to work with, our kiln also was almost complete before the camp started. In spite of all these arrangements, it was not possible for us to work with clay. Primarily because it took us a long time to complete our linocut works, secondly heavy rain started pouring before the camp came to an end. This made it impossible to go on working at the studio. The rain water leaked through the tiled roof and entered the working area – we had to stop our work for a few days.

We invited Soman [K P Soman] from Kolkata to come and work in this camp, as planned earlier. He said he would join in later part of the camp but never arrived. A magazine publisher and writer from Durgapur called Sri Manabendu Ray wanted to visit our camp to learn about our activities. We invited him to come but Manabendu-babu could not make it.

Our discussion sessions this year could not be properly organized due to lack of time. We still did have some sessions and also were able to take some resolutions. We discussed about the state our works reached at in the context of our experiences of last four years and observed that most of us work keeping the thinking people in mind as viewers. Only the thinking people, who certainly belong to the middle-class, can become the serious viewers of our works. This does not, in any case, mean that the other classes of people cannot communicate with our works at all. We took up the Poush Mela stall project to address these general-educated people and perhaps our Mela stall and related works are the most successful ones among all the projects we work on. The two portfolios we produced also reached people belonging to this category. Many of us work with the condition

of lower class or labour class but even then, the artists keep middle or lower middle class in mind as viewers of these art works. We must go closer to the lower class people if we want to make our practice meaningful ; we must also reconstruct our way of life to do that. But as most of us live a kind of life which is impossible to suitably change at the moment, we resolved on the basis of our conversations that it is preferable to have exhibitions where we find educated middle-class or lower middle-class population as viewers.

We have also noticed that our collective activities have been gradually reduced to just one summer camp a year. We will take up some new initiatives to make our art works easily available to the viewers discussed above. Conversation took place regarding ways to take our art and views on art practice to the viewers beyond the exhibition space. Mela stall, in that sense, is an attempt to establish contact with a large number of people through our art works. Calendars this year are theme-based ; we will make terracotta also theme based. (One can make many works based on one theme – may not necessarily be works done by everybody on a common subject.) Mela stall will be newly decorated with a larger space – an exhibition of six to eight works will be held at the stall. As most of us are printmakers, we will do painting on a particular subject for this show. We hope to be able to convey our viewpoint through these attempts to the visitors.

Mela starts from 22 December ; all are therefore requested to send their paintings to Santiniketan by 20 December. Subject : Social Satire. Size of painting : 22”x32” (maximum).

We explored the possibility of publishing photocopied booklets consisting of drawings and texts for the same purpose and sell them at a cheap price. It will also have an underlying thematic rhythm to communicate our belief and attitude to the people – will let everybody know about the details of it later. Details such as printing expenditure, number of pages and editions or the probability of printing drawings in halftone, the subject matter and so on are not fixed yet.

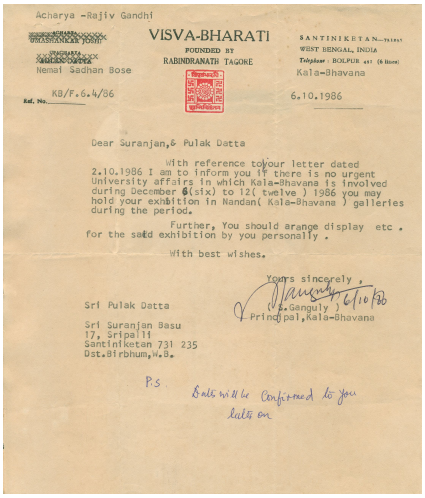
So far, we did not want to hold exhibitions till our works achieve a proper position. But now, all of us think that we should be in direct contact with a variety of viewers ; that we should face criticism to take our works in the right direction. A decision to organise an exhibition with two scroll paintings we produced together, prints of the two folios we made, a selection from our mela works along with individually created pieces during the Book fair in Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata next year, was taken. Responsibility to enquire about the show is given to Pinaki. The catalogue should carry an honest description of the purpose of our coming together, our experiences, what exactly we are trying to do and what we have done so far.

In addition to the mela stall and Kolkata exhibition, it was proposed that we put a permanent display board at Subarnarekha book stall where we will display our works and periodically change them. By the way, we must inform all that our

colour linocut prints with signatures and the write-up is ready and started being sold.

Prabir-da did not work with us this year in spite of being in Santiniketan. He, for his own sake, wanted to keep a distance from us till he resolves some immediate problems he is facing. He stuck to his stand even though after discussing the matter we all requested him to participate in the camp.

Please go through this report carefully – we request everybody to give us your suggestions and views regarding this.



Acharya -Rajiv Gandhi

VISVA-BHARATI
FOUNDED BY
RABINDRANATH TAGORE

SANTINIKETAN
WEST BENGAL, INDIA
Telephone : BOLPUR 451 (6 lines)

Nemai Sadhan Bose

Kala-Bhavana

Ref. No. KB/F.6.4/86

6.10.1986

Dear Suranjan,& Pulak Datta

With reference to your letter dated 2.10.1986 I am to inform you if there is no urgent University affairs in which Kala-Bhavana is involved during December 6(six) to 12(twelve) 1986 you may hold your exhibition in Nandan(Kala-Bhavana) galleries during the period.

Further, You should arange display etc . for the said exhibition by you personally .

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely ,

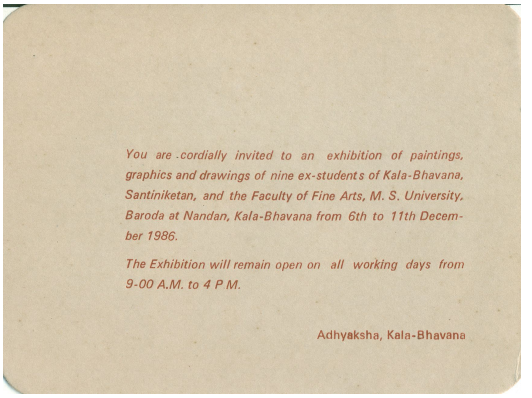
(S.Ganguly) 6/10/86
Principal,Kala-Bhavana

Sri Pulak Datta

Sri Suranjan Basu
17, Sripalli
Santiniketan 731 235
Dst.Birbhum,W.B.

P.S

Dates will be confirmed to you later on

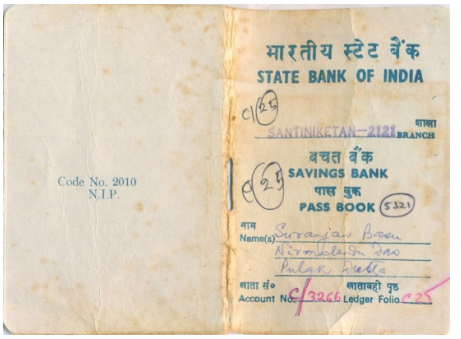


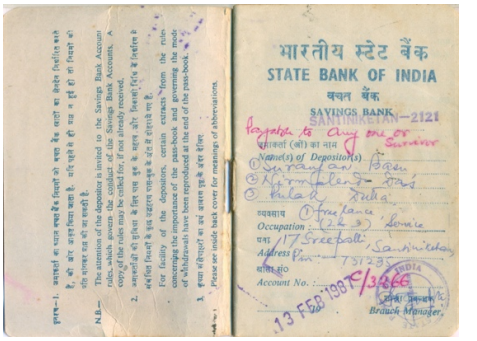
You are cordially invited to an exhibition of paintings, graphics and drawings of nine ex-students of Kala-Bhavana, Santiniketan, and the Faculty of Fine Arts, M. S. University, Baroda at Nandan, Kala-Bhavana from 6th to 11th December 1986.

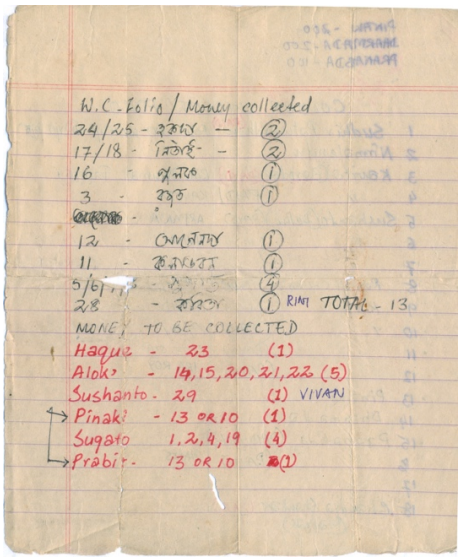
The Exhibition will remain open on all working days from 9-00 A.M. to 4 P.M.

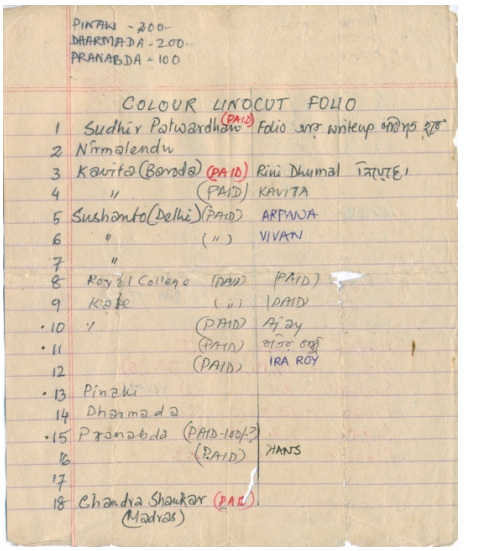
Adhyaksha, Kala-Bhavana

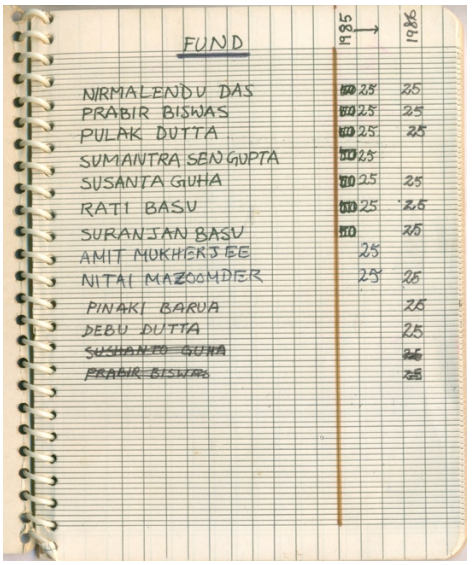
Selected documents from Accounts books etc.





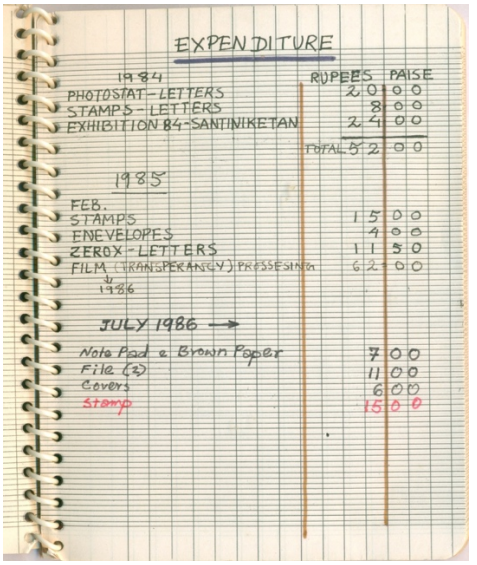






FUND

	1985 →	1986
NIRMALENDU DAS	~~10~~ 25	25
PRABIR BISWAS	~~10~~ 25	25
PULAK DUTTA	~~10~~ 25	25
SUMANTRA SENGUPTA	~~10~~ 25	
SUSANTA GUHA	~~10~~ 25	25
RATI BASU	~~10~~ 25	25
SURANJAN BASU	~~10~~	25
AMIT MUKHERJEE	25	
NITAI MAZOOMDER	25	25
PINAKI BARUA		25
DEBU DUTTA		25
~~SUSANTA GUHA~~		~~25~~
~~PRABIR BISWAS~~		~~25~~



EXPENDITURE

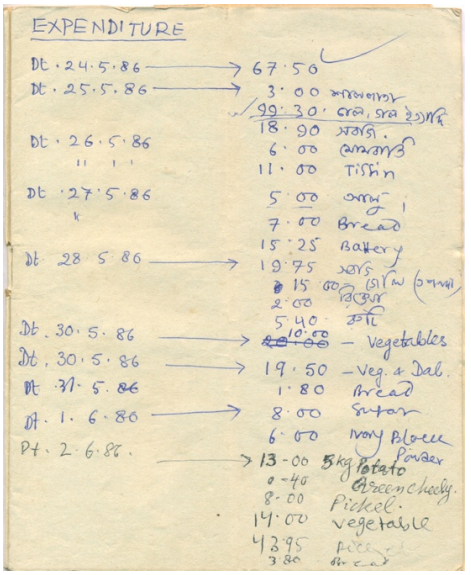
1984	RUPEES	PAISE
PHOTOSTAT-LETTERS	201	00
STAMPS-LETTERS	8	00
EXHIBITION 84-SANTINIKETAN	243	00
TOTAL	452	00

1985

FEB.		
STAMPS	15	00
ENEVELOPES	4	00
ZEROX-LETTERS	11	50
FILM (TRANSPERANCY) PRESSESINGH & 1986	62	00

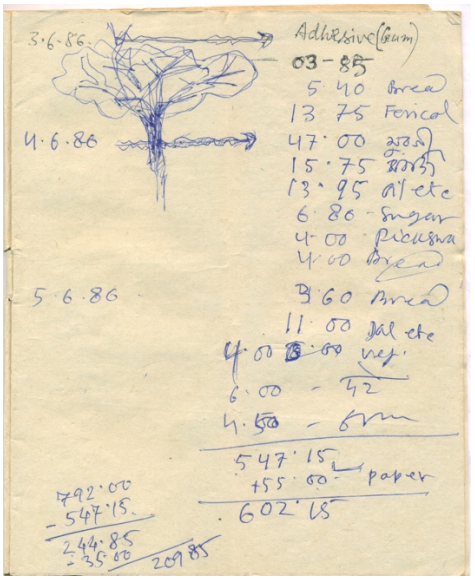
JULY 1986 →

Note Pad & Brown Paper	7	00
File (2)	11	00
Covers	6	00
Stamp	150	0



EXPENDITURE

Dt. 24.5.86 →	67.50	
Dt. 25.5.86 →	3.00	
	99.30	
	18.90	
Dt. 26.5.86	6.00	
" "	11.00	Tiffin
Dt. 27.5.86	5.00	
"	7.00	Bread
	15.25	Battery
Dt. 28.5.86 →	19.75	
	15.00	
	2.00	
	5.40	
	10.00	
Dt. 30.5.86 →	~~20.00~~	– Vegetables
Dt. 30.5.86 →	19.50	– Veg. & Dal.
Dt. 31.5.86	1.80	Bread
Dt. 1.6.86 →	8.00	Sugar
	6.00	Ivory Bloom Powder
Dt. 2.6.86. →	13.00	5kg Potato
	0.40	Green chilly.
	8.00	Pickel.
	14.00	vegetable
	42.95	
	3.80	Bread



3.6.86 →

4.6.86 →

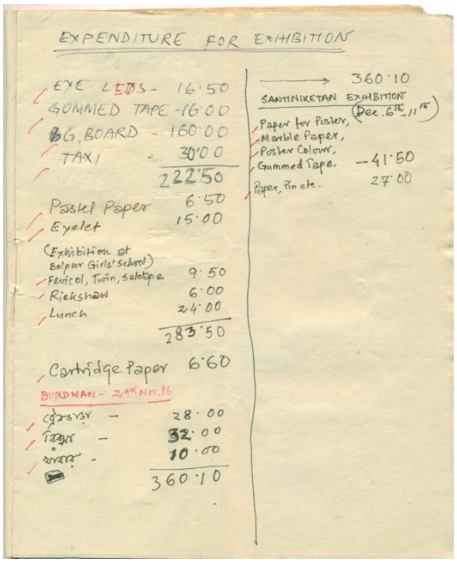
5.6.86

Adhesive (Gum)

03-85

5.40	Bread
13.75	Fenical
47.00	[illegible]
15.75	[illegible]
13.95	Oil etc
6.80	Sugar
4.00	Pickles
4.00	Bread
3.60	Bread
11.00	Dal etc
4.00	~~8.00~~ veg.
6.00	– 42
4.50	– 6rm
547.15	
+55.00	– paper
602.15	

792.00
– 547.15
244.85
– 35.00
209.85



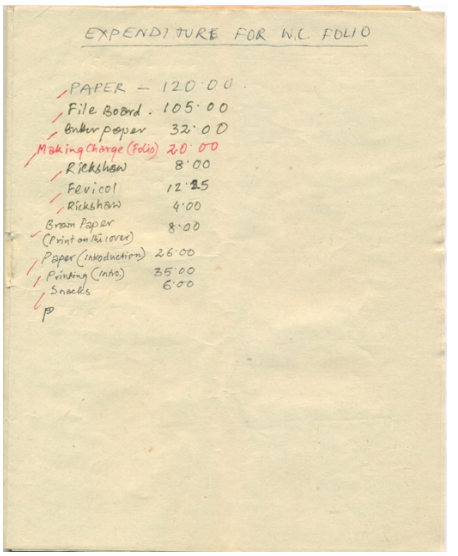
EXPENDITURE FOR EXHIBITION

EYE LEDS -	16·50
GUMMED TAPE -	16·00
BG. BOARD -	160·00
TAXI -	30·00
	222·50
Pastel Paper	6·50
Eyelet	15·00
(Exhibition at Bolpur Girls' School)	
Fevicol, Twin, Selotape	9·50
Rickshaw	6·00
Lunch	24·00
	283·50
Cartridge Paper	6·60
BURDWAN - 24th Nov. 86	
ট্রেজারার -	28·00
রিক্সা -	32·00
খাবার -	10·00
	360·10

→ 360·10

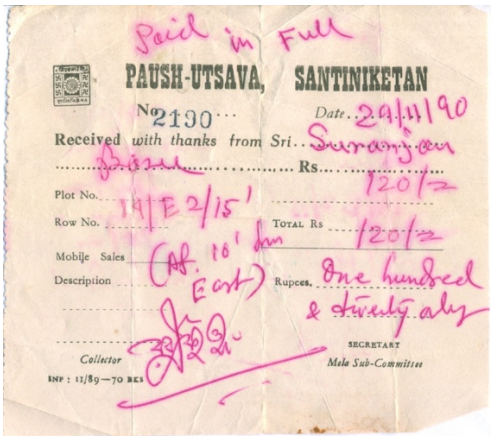
SANTINIKETAN EXHIBITION (Dec. 6th - 11th)

Paper for Poster, Marble Paper, Poster Colour, Gummed Tape.	-41·50
Paper, Pin etc.	27·00



EXPENDITURE FOR W.C. FOLIO

PAPER -	120·00
File Board.	105·00
Butter paper	32·00
Making Charge (Folio)	20·00
Rickshaw	8·00
Fevicol	12·25
Rickshaw	4·00
Brown Paper (Print on the cover)	8·00
Paper (Introduction)	26·00
Printing (Intro.)	35·00
Snacks	6·00



Paid in Full

PAUSH-UTSAVA, SANTINIKETAN

No. 2190 Date 29/11/90

Received with thanks from Sri Suranjan Basu Rs. 120/-

Plot No. 14/E 2/15'

Row No.

Total Rs 120/-

Mobile Sales (At 10' from East)

Description

Rupees One hundred & twenty only

Collector

SECRETARY
Mela Sub-Committee

INP : 11/89—70 BKS

PAUSH-UTSAVA
SANTINIKETAN
ELECTRICITY

No. E 3243 Date 22/12

Received from Suranjan Basu

Rs. 96/- for 3 points only

Description [illegible]

Signature

Paush Utsav 1986

EXPENDITURE

1/	Plot for Stall (15' → Rs.8/foot) (Plot No. 14/E/3-15' after 20' from east) Sl. No. 4183	120=00
2/	[illegible] -8৫ -	84=00
3/	Rickshaw	3=00
4)	DECORETER ADVANCE	100=00
5)	ENVELOPE ETC.	80=40
6)	COROGETED PAPER	70=00
7)	FEVICOL	14=00
8)	NAILS ETC.	13=40
9)	P. BOARD	10=00
10)	STRAW & RIKSHA	14=00
11)	ELECTRICITY CONECTION	60=00
12)	WOODEN BITS	16=00
13)	FOOD (22/12)	8=00
23/12		
14)	RIKSHA	13=00
15)	GATSY	33=00
16)	COFFEE	13=50
17)	COFFEE	12=00
18)	LUNCH (DEBU)	5=00
24/12/86		
	COFFEE	7=50
	LUNCH	10=00

24/12/86

FOOD — 18=00

25/12/86

DECCORETERS	350=00	PAID	TOTAL 450=00
[illegible]	10=00		
LUNCH	5=00		
TEA	2=00		
FOOD	70=50	~~[illegible]~~ PAID	

26/12/86

COFFEE — 6=00

27/12/86

রিক্সা — 20=00

FOOD — 2=00

Calendar – 160 (colour) + 80 (B&W)	[15/-each]	-	3600.00
30 (B&W)	[12/-each]	-	360.00
13 (etching)	[20/-each]	-	260.00
8 (Drawing)	[30/-each]	-	240.00
Greeting Cards (Printed)	[3/-each]	-	960.00
(Painted)	[5/-each]		

PAUSH UTSAV 1987

CALENDAR –	LINO –	105=75	PINAKI
	PAPER –	325=00	PINAKI + TUBLU
	TAXI –	25=00	~~TUBLU~~
	PLY WINDOW –	20=25	
		476=00	
CARD –	PAPER –	37=50	TUBLU
	ENVELOPE –	12=00	
TERRACOTTA –	CLAY –	40=00	
	চালনা –	11=00	
	POLYTHENE –	7=20	
		58=20	
CALENDAR – DATE PRINTING		100=00	
	PAPER FOR COVER –	35=00	
	RICKSHAW –	10=00	
		145=00	

~~Envelope – 12=00~~

Rs-200/- GIVEN TO NAKU on 11/10/86 FOR CALENDAR PRINTING Etc.

JUST TO KEEP THE RECORD STRAIGHT — spent from this money which was actually given to Nirmal to hand it over to Nanu. Fortunately we did get the money back on 12/10/86

MELA CAMP

15/10/87

Food	203=85
Egg	11=00
MAL	78=00
BULB	7=00
KEROSENE	
	299=85

440
210
230

13/7/91

SUMMER CAMP 1988

31/May চাল, ডাল, চিনি ইত্যাদি — 138=95
সবজি — 34=90
চা — 40=00
[illegible] মুড়ি — 30=00
রিক্সা — 6=00
249=85 — 249=85

চাল - 10kg - 42/-
মুগ ডাল 1kg 14/-
মুসুর " 1kg 8/-
স: তেল 2kg 40/-
চিনি 2kg 13.00
ইত্যাদি ...

1/June কাঠ - 50 kg — 32=00
কেরোসিন 2 liter — 8=00
রিক্সা — 4=00
গামছা হাঁড়ি — 14=00 — 58=00
~~Studio ভাড়া (June) — 210=00~~ — ~~268=00~~
268=00
210=00
58=00

2/6 সবজি — 10=95
চপ-মুড়ি, সাবান — 16=00
26=95 — 26=95

3/6 [illegible] বোর্ড — 3=00
সেলোটেপ — 2=50
মোমবাতি — 4=00
ছুঁচ — 1=00
10=50 — 10=50

1997
2000.01
9.13

4/6 চাল - 10kg
ডাল - 500gr
সবজি — 76=40
রিক্সা — 6=00
82=40 — 82=40

~~Rent (Fan) May, June — 20=00~~

5/6 মাছ — 20=00
কাঠ - 50kg — 34=00
চপ, মুড়ি — 12=00
66=00 — 66=00
7/6 সবজি — 29=50 — 29=50
9/6 কেরোসিন — 8=00
[illegible] — 4=00
ডাল, নুন — 10=00
সবজি, ডিম — 15=00
37=00 — 37=00
10/6 চাল, সবজি, চা, চিনি — 74=40
Plywoods — 50=00
124=40 — 124=40
11/6 তেল, সবজি — 18=50 — 18=50

প্রাপ্য — 160=00
15/6 মাংস — 70=00
16/6 পাঁঠা — 150=00
রঞ্জন (ফুল) — 10=00
160=00

মোট খরচ — 933=10

1143=10
−210=00
933=10

বাকি - কাঠ, মসলা — 50=00
983=10

বরুণ — 100=00
সুশান্ত — 100=00
[illegible] — 100=00

2004=14

W O R K S

Portfolios

The Saw Mill 1986

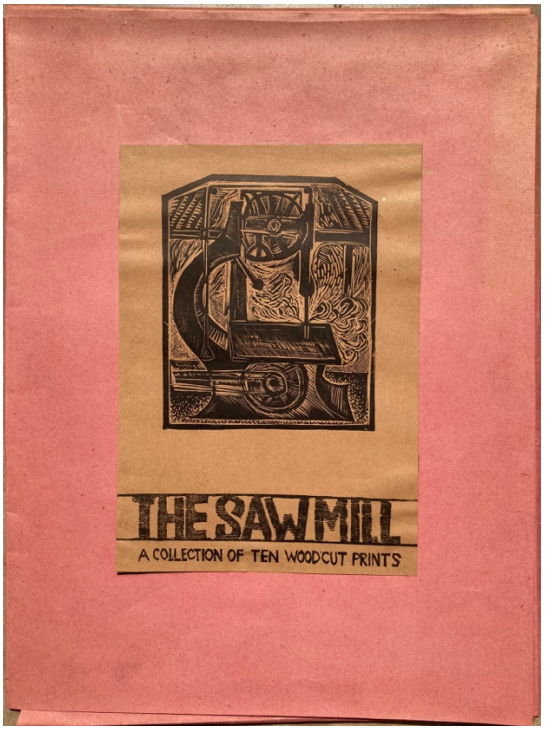
Servant Maid-Servant 1987

Calendars

1986

1987

1988



THE SAW MILL

A COLLECTION OF TEN WOODCUT PRINTS

Alok Som
Nirmalendu Das
Pinaki Barua
Prabir Biswas
Pulak Dutta
Rati Basu
Sujata Mukherjee
Suranjan Basu
Sushanta Guha
Tarit Bhattacharya

17, SHREE PALLI, SANTINIKETAN, 731235, WEST BENGAL, INDIA. 1986

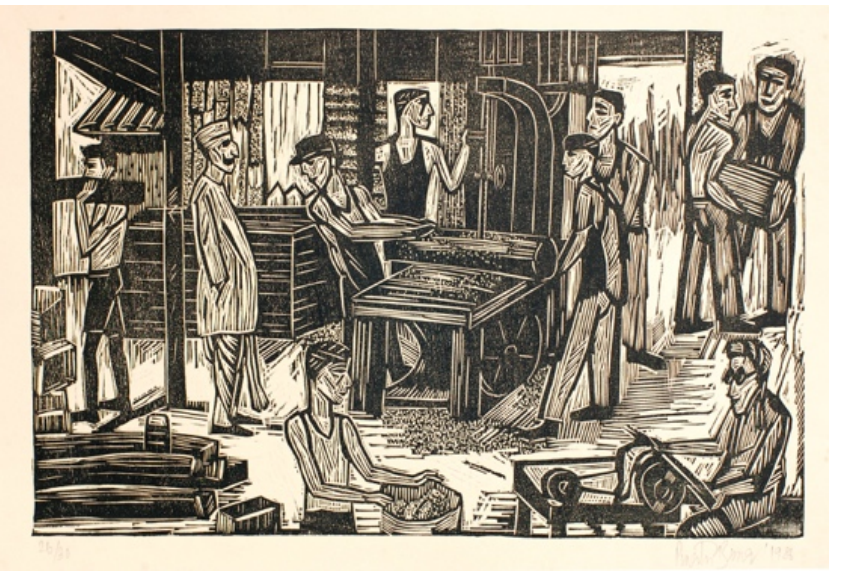
Life is an idea itself. The various life-forms that exist in nature are qualitatively different in meaning and form. But in all variant life forms there is a definite intrinsic concept. Many '*Wisdoms*' have tried to define 'Man'. Wisdom apart, 'Man' or 'Life' springs of occassional surprises defying all scientific, religious, literary and philosophical interpretations and calculations. Perhaps it is this element of '*Surprise*' which makes life more beautiful and meaningful. So, instead of going back to the brief history or sequence of facts which prompted these ten young artists to group together and present this portfolio it is worth investigating why they have attempted to do so. In a class divided society where 'God' has still a meaningless important stature in social life, where Hero worship is a general current of the day, the concept of 'collectivity' or more so 'collective art' seems to be a distant dream. The subject of this folio is the Saw Mill and the daily life of its workers. The central idea of choosing one topic by the ten artists and executing them in one medium, i. e, in woodcut (which has almost become obsolete today) is directly linked to the '*Spirit of Collectivity*.'

Qualitative consideration against each print will come easily, questions regarding relevence of portraying "*The Saw Mill and its Workers*" will be hotly debated, but one hopes that this kind of an effort is able to arouse serious attention and study. Undoubtedly the main concern of these artists is 'Man', Man as seen in its dialectical relationship with Nature. This then is the idea (or imagination), the primary issue around which these artists exert their probing mind.

Alok Som 10.75” x 11.5”

Nirmalendu Das 12.5” x 9.25”

Prabir Biswas 8.75” x 11.75”



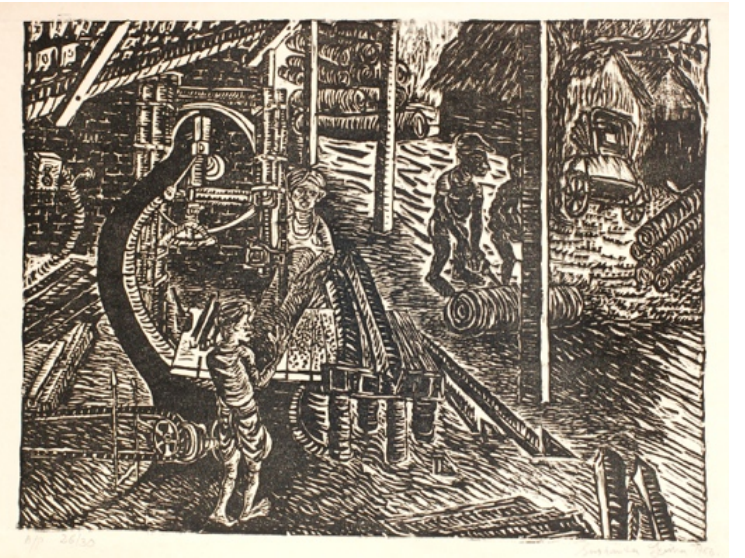
Pinaki Barua 11.5” x 7.5”

Pulak Dutta 12.5” x 8.75”

Rati Basu 11.75” x 8”

Sujata Mukherjee 11.75” x 8”

Suranjan Basu. 12.25” x 8.25”

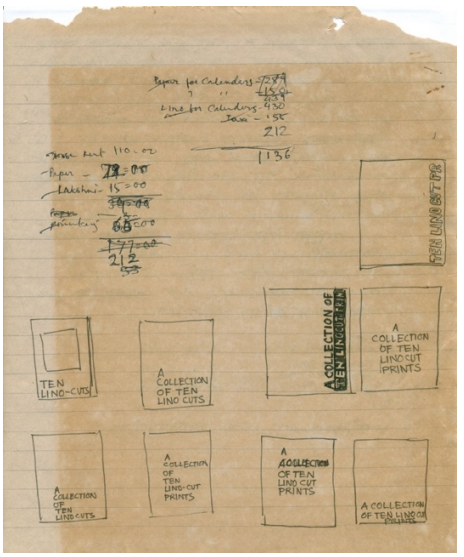


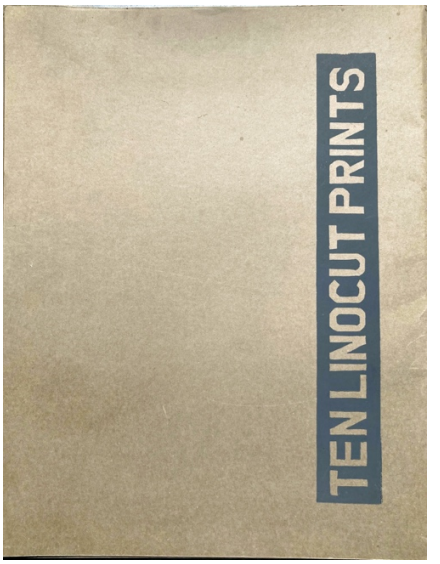
Sushanta Guha 13” x 9.75”

Tarit Bhattacharya. 8.5” x 11.25”

SERVANT MAID-SERVANT 1987

Image size : 15" x 11"





SERVANT MAID-SERVANT

Ten Linocut Prints
1987

INTRODUCTION

Which artist or generation of artists are luckier than the others ? The ones who witness the fully evolved and finished capitalism of their time or the ones who become contemporary with social transformation permitted to see objects as they issue from human work, the ones who are able to apprehend social change as a network of individual/collective stories ?

It seems that this group of artists represented in the portfolio have the historical luck to see not only the smoking chimneys and other end products of the capitalist society but also the human activities visible to the naked eye. The moment of history which they pick up are not imaginary, they are not mere descriptions of 'perpetual frustrations of the ideal.' The selection of a theme like **'Servant Maid-Servant'** emphasises the basic concreteness in art. In a traditional society like ours, where feudalism still holds sway, it is interesting to note that an apparently minor relational system has caught the imagination of these artists. The theme does permit us to feel everything in them in purely human terms.

The methodology of their work is that of an observant outsider. This necessitates the selection of themes on the basis of priority over characters and situations, a careful background documentation, and even a visit to the locale. This methodology is one of the principal device by which these artists have sought to unveil the contradictions of human relationships on societal and individual level. Characters and situations though wrapped in utmost warmth, is not the ultimate motive. It is the moments of history caught in relational value system which opens the possibility of exposing some basic general truth of life. Something happens in life, some notorious cruelty seems to be wanting to be hated, some out of the way fun sparkles.

When the theme of this portfolio speaks of larger than life collective units it is better to refrain from patronising individual brilliance. What merits attention of all is the confidence and faith in artists themselves in their daring but successful attempt at large size colour linocuts, which is a rare thing in the art scene today.

Amit Mukhopadhyay

Alok Som, Nirmalendu Das, Nitai Mazumdar, Pinaki Barua, Prabir Biswas, Pulak Dutta, Ramprasad Bhattacharya, Rati Basu, Suranjan Basu, Sushanta Guha.

17, Sreepalli, Santiniketan, West Bengal

Alok Som

Nirmalendu Das

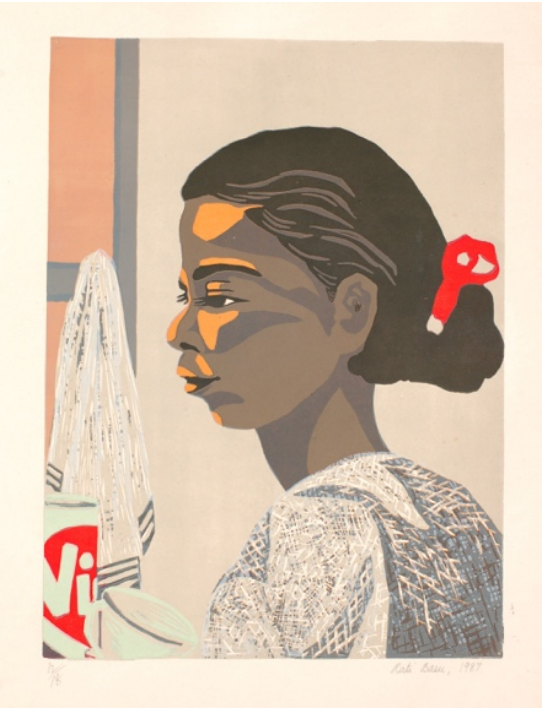
Nitai Mazumdar

Pinaki Barua

Prabir Biswas

Pulak Dutta

Ramprasad Bhattacharya

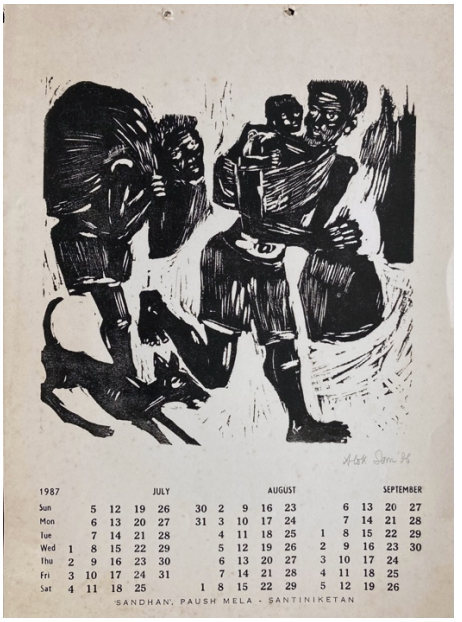


Rati Basu

Suranjan Basu

Sushanta Guha

CALENDARS 1986 *Paper size : 11"x15"*

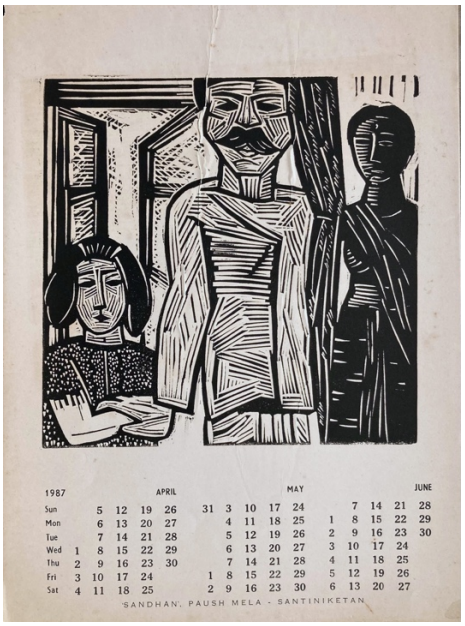


1987

	JULY				AUGUST					SEPTEMBER				
Sun		5	12	19	26	30	2	9	16	23	6	13	20	27
Mon		6	13	20	27	31	3	10	17	24	7	14	21	28
Tue		7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29
Wed	1	8	15	22	29		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30
Thu	2	9	16	23	30		6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	
Fri	3	10	17	24	31		7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	
Sat	4	11	18	25		1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	

'SANDHAN', PAUSH MELA - SANTINIKETAN

Alok Som



1987

	APRIL					MAY					JUNE				
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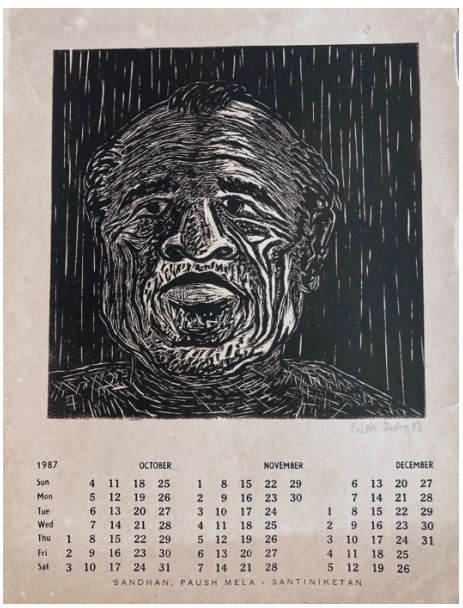
Mon		6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29
Tue		7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30
Wed	1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	
Thu	2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	
Fri	3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	
Sat	4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	

'SANDHAN', PAUSH MELA - SANTINIKETAN

Pinaki Barua



1987

	OCTOBER					NOVEMBER					DECEMBER				
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Tue		6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29
Wed		7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30
Thu	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	31
Fri	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25	
Sat	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26	

'SANDHAN', PAUSH MELA - SANTINIKETAN

Pulak Dutta

1987

	OCTOBER					NOVEMBER					DECEMBER				
Sun		4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27
Mon		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28
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Fri	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25	
Sat	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26	

'SANDHAN', PAUSH MELA - SANTINIKETAN

Rati Basu

CALENDARS 1987. *Paper size : 10.5”x14.5”*

Cover

1988

	JANUARY				FEBRUARY				MARCH				
Mon		4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29		7	14	21	28
Tue		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23		1	8	15	22	29
Wed		6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24		2	9	16	23	30
Thu		7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25		3	10	17	24	31
Fri	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26		4	11	18	25	
Sat	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27		5	12	19	26	
Sun	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28		6	13	20	27	

SANDHANE - PAUSH UTSAV - SANTINIKETAN

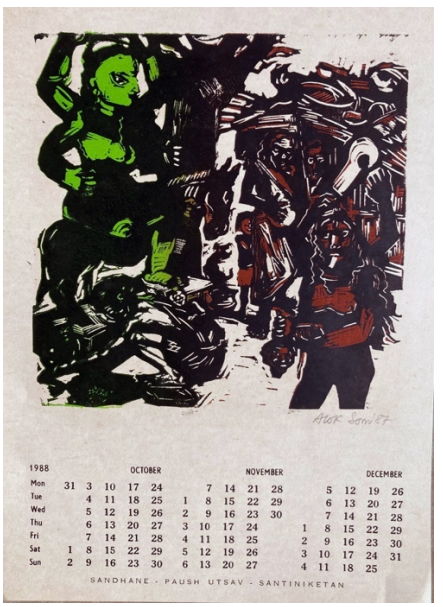
Pulak Dutta

1988

	JULY					AUGUST					SEPTEMBER				
Mon		4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29		5	12	19	26
Tue		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30		6	13	20	27
Wed		6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31		7	14	21	28
Thu		7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25		1	8	15	22	29
Fri	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26		2	9	16	23	30
Sat	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27		3	10	17	24	
Sun	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25	

SANDHANE - PAUSH UTSAV - SANTINIKETAN

Rati Basu



1988

	OCTOBER					NOVEMBER					DECEMBER				
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Tue		4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27
Wed		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28
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Fri		7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30
Sat	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	31
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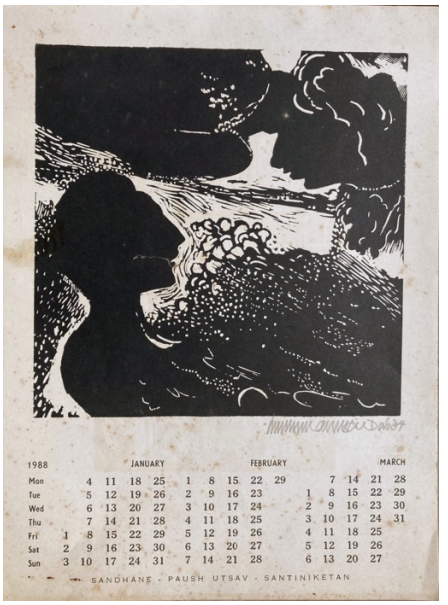
SANDHANE - PAUSH UTSAV - SANTINIKETAN

Alok Som

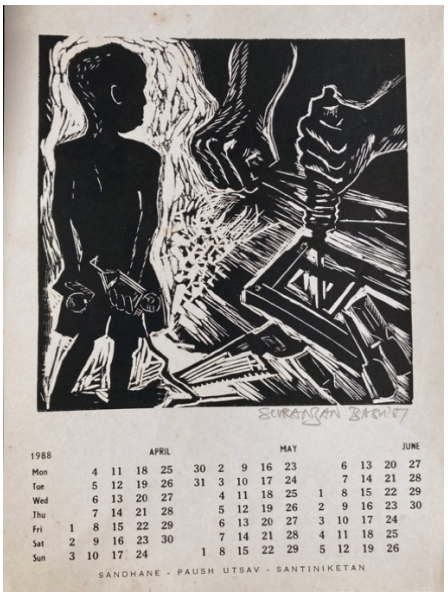


1988

JANUARY					FEBRUARY					MARCH				
Mon		4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	7	14	21	28
Tue		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23		1	8	15	22	29
Wed		6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24		2	9	16	23	30
Thu		7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25		3	10	17	24	31
Fri	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26		4	11	18	25	
Sat	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27		5	12	19	26	
Sun	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28		6	13	20	27	

SANDHANE - PAUSH UTSAV - SANTINIKETAN

Nirmalendu Das

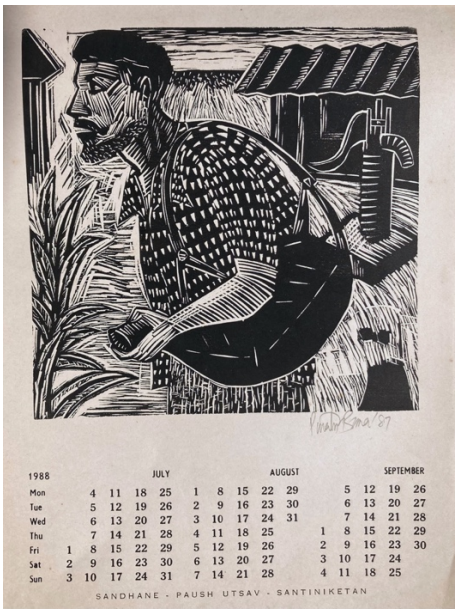


1988

APRIL						MAY						JUNE			
Mon		4	11	18	25	30	2	9	16	23		6	13	20	27
Tue		5	12	19	26	31	3	10	17	24		7	14	21	28
Wed		6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29
Thu		7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30
Fri	1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	
Sat	2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	
Sun	3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	

SANDHANE - PAUSH UTSAV - SANTINIKETAN

Suranjan Basu



1988

JULY					AUGUST					SEPTEMBER				
Mon		4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26
Tue		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27
Wed		6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28
Thu		7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25		1	8	15	22	29
Fri	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26		2	9	16	23	30
Sat	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27		3	10	17	24	
Sun	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25	

SANDHANE - PAUSH UTSAV - SANTINIKETAN

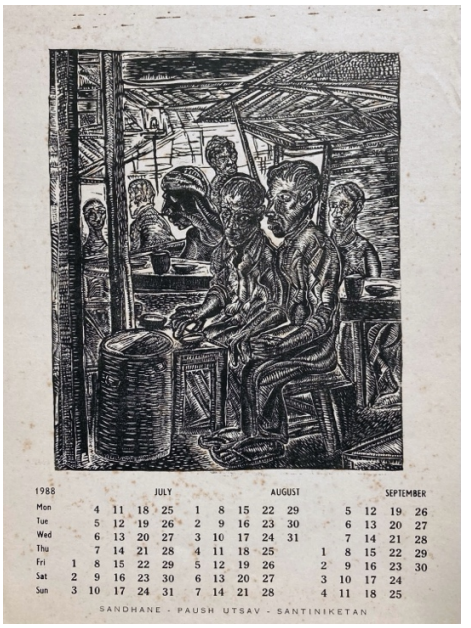
Pinaki Barua

1988

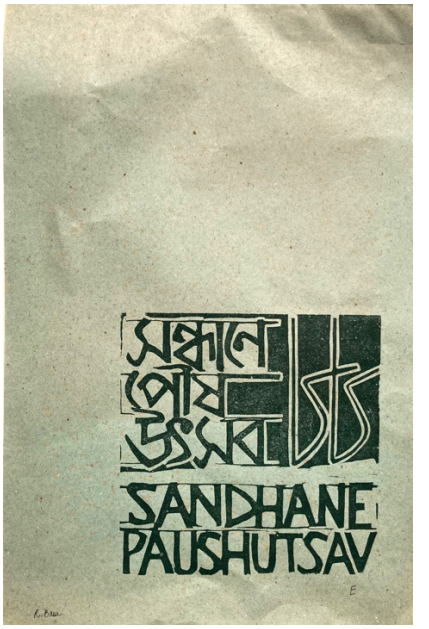
OCTOBER						NOVEMBER						DECEMBER			
Mon	31	3	10	17	24		7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26
Tue		4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27
Wed		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28
Thu		6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29
Fri		7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30
Sat	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	31
Sun	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25	

SANDHANE - PAUSH UTSAV - SANTINIKETAN

Indrani Barua



Sushanta Guha

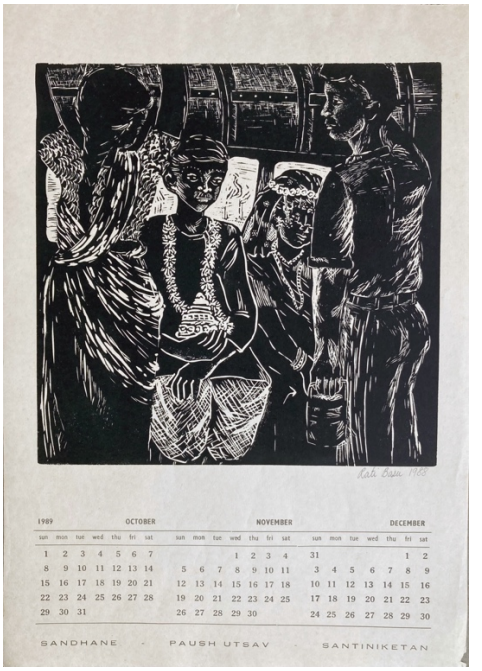


CALENDARS 1988 Cover

Alok Som. 11.5”x17.5”

Nirmalendu Das 14”x20”

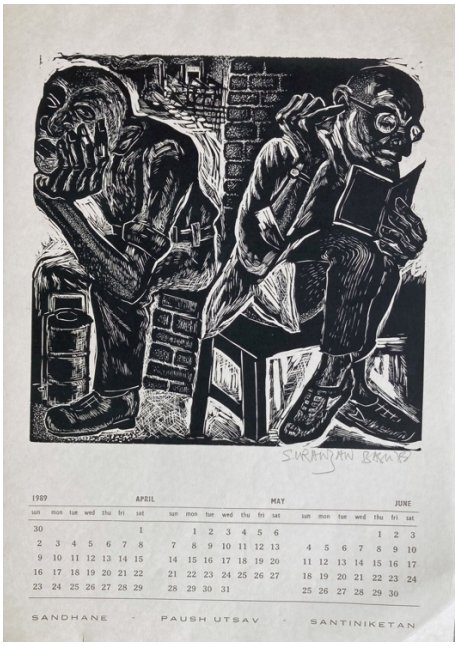
Indrani Barua 11.5”x17.5”



Rati Basu. 14”x20”

Sumantra Sengupta 14”x20”

Pinaki Barua 14”x20”



Suranjan Basu 14”x20”

Alok Som 14”x20”

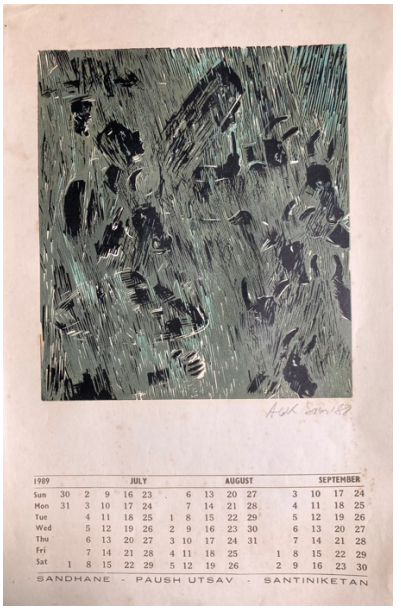
Sukanya Das 11.5”x17.5

Pulak Dutta 14”x20”

SEASONS 11.5”x17.5”

Rati Basu

Cover



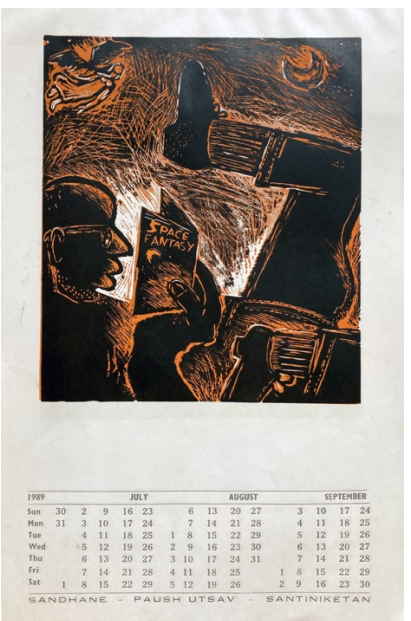
Alok Som

Alok Som

EDUCATION SYSTEM TODAY 11.5”x17.5”

Nirmalendu Das

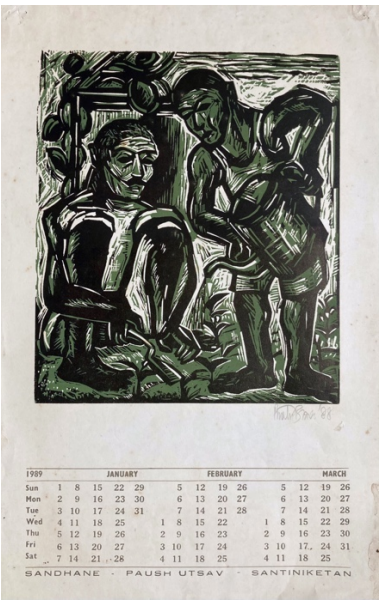
Pulak Dutta



Nirmalendu Das

Pulak Dutta

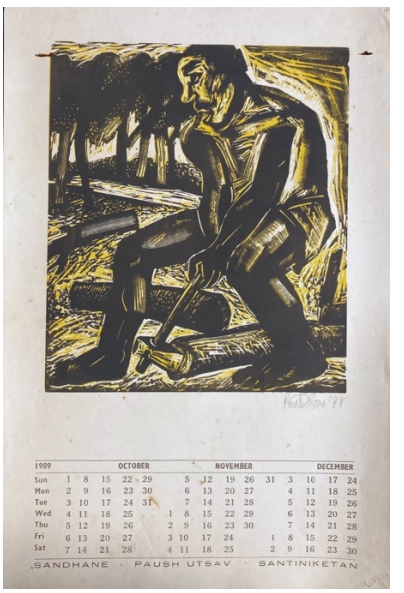
LIFE OF TREES 11.5”x17.5”



Pinaki Barua

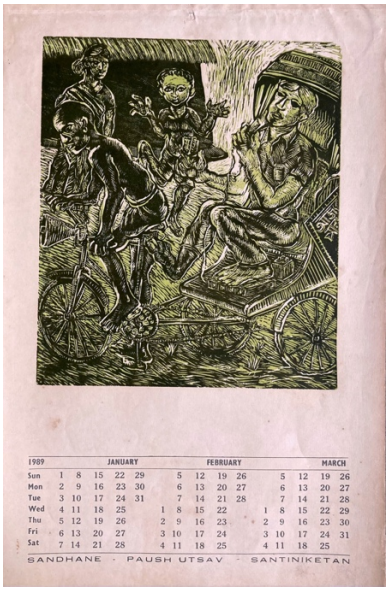
Debabrata Dutta

Debabrata Dutta



Pinaki Barua

VILLAGE JATRA 11.5”x17.5”



Sushanta Guha

Suranjan Basu

Sushanta Guha

Suranjan Basu

Does art have a public life ? Can art live outside the professional artist-gallery-media-buyer circuit ? A large majority of ordinary people is outside this circuit. Can art have a public life ? Shouldn't the art learned, researched and produced in academic circle live outside this circle as well ? Can there be a system through which one can share this learning and production with the larger section of people ? These were some of the questions, which provoked a group of artists to come together in the summer of 1984. Most of them had a Marxist outlook ; all of them were connected with Santiniketan, directly or indirectly.

This book tells the story of their exploration of paths and strategies together, to develop a practice which would take them and their art closer to the people.

They started calling themselves *The Realists* from their first professional show held in Kolkata in 1990.